

PLUCK AND LUCK

COMPLETE STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

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Price 7 Cents

CLEAR THE TRACK TOM; OR THE YOUNGEST ENGINEER ON THE ROAD.

By JAS C. MERRITT.

AND OTHER STORIES



The figure suddenly straightened up, threw off the long coat, dashed the white hat to the ground, and waved the lantern triumphantly. Clear—the—track—Tom! The outlaws had been foiled, cheated of their prize. "It's the right signal, and the train is safe!"

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CLEAR THE TRACK TOM

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CHAPTER I.—Tom's Early Struggles.

"Hallo, youngster! What are you doing here?"

This question was put by John Overton, master machinist in the Great Western car shops, in the city of St. Louis, to a lad of about ten years. The former was about to ascend the steps leading to the office of the car shops one morning, when he found a boy sitting half asleep on the middle step. The little fellow had a keen, intelligent look, though his faded and patched garments, his battered hat, his disconsolate shoes, and, above all, his pinched and worn face and hands, denoted that he had had a pretty early initiation into the battle of life, and had not altogether had the best of it.

"What am I doing?" replied the boy. "I'm waiting for a job."

"What can you do?"

"Most anything."

"What is your name?"

"Tom."

"Tom what?"

"That's all."

"Have you no other name?"

"Not that I know of."

"Where do you live?"

"No place, any place; here sometimes, there sometimes; nowhere generally."

"Will you sweep out the office? The porter will be late this morning."

"I'll do anything."

After the sweeping, there were errands to be run, messages to take, and several odd jobs wanting attention, in all of which Tom took a hand, to the great satisfaction of John Overton. That night Tom slept in a cheap lodging house, and had a hot supper, being on hand the next morning before the place was open. During the day he worked in the shops, helping the men, and proving quite apt and intelligent, so that thereafter he came regularly to work, and attended strictly to business, being liked by all, though the apprentice boys were disposed to tyrannize over him. At the end of a couple of months he went to Overton and said suddenly:

"I want to learn the trade."

"Be a machinist?"

"Yes."

"Well, we'll draw up the papers this evening, if you'll come to my house."

Tom was on hand as spruce as a new pin, and they at once proceeded to business.

"I say, my boy," said the master suddenly, as

he glanced over the papers, "you'll have to get a name, you know. Just plain Tom won't do."

"Will any name do? I don't know my own; honest I don't."

"Yes; but you'll have to keep it for all time. So pick out a good one."

"Lend me yours; that's plenty good enough for me. Fact, I couldn't get a better."

"You want to be called Tom Overton?" asked the other, laughing.

"That's it. Sounds well, don't it, sir?"

"Couldn't be better. But I say, folks'll be taking you for my son."

"I ain't ashamed to have 'em," was the brusque answer. "You're a gentleman, and an honest man, and I'd rather have your name than any other man's in the United States, even the President himself."

"So you shall, my boy," cried the man, pleased rather than otherwise, for he had no boys of his own, and really felt a great affection for the friendless youth.

Our hero regularly became Tom Overton after that, the name being declared legally his, his indentures being made out accordingly. John Overton had no cause to regret either step, for Tom not only became a credit to the name he had taken, but soon distanced all the other apprentices in intelligence, as he had done in physical strength. Six years passed rapidly, and Tom became a most valuable acquisition to the shops, knowing more, at the end of that period, than any man there, John Overton alone excepted.

From knowing how to build a locomotive, Tom soon began to run one, being appointed to the position of yardmaster on the railroad, and having charge of the switching of all the freight and passenger cars. He wanted to be more than this, however, the position of engineer being one he greatly coveted. Overton told him he was too young for that, and bade him wait till he was of age.

"Clear the track!" cried Tom. "I can run an engine as well as the next man, and if I can't get a place here I'll go somewhere else; so clear the track."

"They want a man on the Deep Valley road up in the northern part of the state. The superintendent has just sent to me to know if I can get him one."

"Can you recommend me?"

"As far as the work is concerned I can, but you're rather——"

"Will you tell 'em that much?"

"Yes."

"That settles it, and the track is cleared."

The next day Tom stood before the superintendent of the Deep Valley road—a short line of about forty miles in length, in the northern part of the state—and handed him Mr. Overton's letter.

"So you're Tom, are you?"

"That's me."

"And you think you can run an engine?"

"I know I can."

Tom was only just eighteen, and of slight build, which made him look younger than he was, and the superintendent was in doubt whether to take him or not. He decided to give Tom a trial at all events, and put him upon a special that very afternoon, being so well pleased with the manner in which Tom handled it that he closed with him at once upon his return. Tom at once took his place on the road, where he became known as the youngest engineer, making a host of friends and a few enemies, as is natural wherever one succeeds.

"Clear the track!" became a favorite expression with him now, having acquired it when a yardman, and it soon became an appendage to his own name, so that Clear-the-track Tom was as familiar now as the other title by which he was first known, that of "the youngest engineer on the road."

CHAPTER II.—A Surprise.

"We've got a new fireman for you, Tom," said the station master at the main terminal of the line one day.

Tom had been on the road a month, and now ran the fast night express, one of the most important trains on the whole time-table. The fireman he had had remained on the other train, and that on the night train had been hurt the day before, necessitating the getting of another. As he spoke, the station master beckoned to a man standing a few paces off, and Tom being on his engine, the latter then approached. He was a man of about fifty years of age, strong and sinewy, having a look of intelligence in his face which illy assorted with his inferior position.

"Does he know anything about firing?" asked Tom, at which the man started, and answered the question himself in the affirmative.

"He's a good man, Tom, and an old engineer, and sooner than do nothing, is ready to go as a fireman. He's a bit old, but he'll do first rate for this."

"If you recommend him, that's enough. What is your name, sir?"

"Driver," answered the man, half turning away. "When do you intend to start?"

"Not for a couple of hours yet. Don't disappoint me."

The superintendent left shortly after that, but had hardly departed before Frank Flash, an acquaintance of Tom's, came along and engaged him in conversation.

"What do you suppose they say, Tom? Jack Johnson and his gang have been committing more robberies, and they think likely he's in this part of the State."

"You can't tell anything about where the scoun-

drel is likely to be. He doesn't go around advertising himself. The first one knows of his being around is his appearance."

During the above a quiet-looking, well-dressed, respectable-appearing man had come up, and hearing what the two lads were talking about, paused to listen.

"Don't you often carry a pretty good pile on the mail car at night?" asked Frank.

"I suppose we do, though that's nothing to me."

"What if Jack Johnson should stop some night and put a pop to your head? What would you do?"

"Oh, bother! What do I know what I'd do. Wait till he does stop me."

"But suppose he did?"

"How could he, with my engine going at a twenty-mile gait? Don't talk nonsense," and Tom went on with his work.

"Wouldn't you be scared?"

"What for? Can't I run the engine faster than he could follow?"

After a little the stranger went away, but not until well out of hearing did he mutter to himself:

"That's a brave lad, and may give us some trouble. Pshaw! what does Jack Johnson care for that? It's lucky that he's on the night train. I must see the boys and tell them. The job is as good as done."

Who, then, was the quiet-looking stranger that had so lately been speaking with our hero? He was none other than the infamous outlaw and train robber—and murderer, too, if many things said of him are true—Jack Johnson himself in disguise.

"So even this boy despises me, does he?" he muttered, as he walked on. "Oh, well, that's nothing. If I can make a good haul, if he gets troublesome, I can shoot him down as quickly as I can any one else, so there's an end to that nonsense."

Shortly before the time for starting Driver appeared, ready for work, and by the way he took hold of things Tom knew he was an old hand at the business. He did not seem at all abashed at having to take a position inferior to a mere boy, but worked away as though Tom was the man and he the lad. An hour later they were rushing through a deep gorge, the headlight throwing a broad luminous track ahead of them, when Tom, having a sudden premonition of danger—why, he could not explain—put his head out of the little window in front, and glanced quickly along the line.

"Shove in the throttle! Call for brakes!" he shouted.

Without asking why, Driver obeyed upon the instant, and then Tom drew in his head.

"Hard down?"

"Yes, sir."

"That's it. There's a man on the track ahead of us, but whether he's dead or drunk or tied down I can't tell."

The train presently came to a pause, and Tom leaped to the ground and ran ahead a few steps. There, not ten feet from the end of the pilot, right across the rails, lay a man, utterly unconscious of all that was going on about him. His face was upturned to the heavens, his eyes clos-

ed, his lips partly open, one arm stretched across his breast and the other lying at his side, his legs crossed, one being partly doubled under him. The face was pale, though that might be on account of the light from the engine shining full upon it. Tom stooped down and laid his hands upon the face and heart of the unconscious man, starting back instantly with an exclamation of surprise. The man's face was like ice, and not the first pulsation answered the touch of his hand.

"He is dead!"

Tom, the conductor, and one of the brakemen lifted the body from the track and laid it on the ground alongside, the conductor suddenly exclaiming:

"My hand is all wet!"

Holding it to the light he saw that it was covered with clotted blood.

"Show a light here."

There was a knife wound in the small of the back deep enough to have caused instant death.

"He has been murdered and placed on the rail that it might be supposed he had been run over and killed by the train."

"Then it's lucky you saw him in time."

"Who could have done it?"

"Don't know," answered Tom briefly. "Come, put him in the baggage car and let us get on; there's no time to lose. Clear the track, all of you."

The next day the body was recognized as that of a noted desperado, and his death could be only a matter of congratulation, although the mystery concerning his sudden taking-off was as deep as ever.

CHAPTER III.—The Bandit Appears.

"Haven't you got any father, Tom?" asked Driver suddenly of our hero, the next night as they were getting ready to go out.

"None that I know of."

"You ought to have one."

"There's Mr. Overton; he's as good as one to me."

"Wouldn't you like to have one of your own?"

"You can be my father, if you like," said Tom, with a laugh, "as it seems to worry you so much."

"Thank you," said the old man, with a sudden gleam in his eyes. "I'll be a good one, you'll find."

Tom laughed again, and later on, to please the old fellow, he called him father two or three times, the man seeming to be very much delighted.

Tom, thinking the man was a little out of his head, humored his fancies, but presently they set off and the conversation stopped. Once, when about a half hour from the start, a stone came crashing through the window at the side, and struck on the floor of the cab.

"That narrowly missed my head," muttered the lad. "Some tramp, I suppose, up to his tricks. If I wouldn't warm his trousers for him when I caught him, you may call me a duffer."

"There's something written on it."

"On the stone?"

"No; but on the paper that's tied around it."

There was a bit of white paper fastened to it, and this Tom unrolled, and saw the one word:

"BEWARE!"

It was written in a bold hand, in black ink, with a blunt pen, the scrap having evidently been torn from a memorandum book, as there were ruled lines upon it.

"Rubbish!" muttered the boy, as he threw the paper out of the cab, where it went fluttering about, and finally landed on the pile of coal in the tender.

Driver picked it up, and, glancing over it, said slowly:

"Beware! Beware of what?"

"I'll never tell you."

"Who threw it in?"

"Ask me something easier."

"Not till we get to the end of the line. Good night."

"Good night, Tom."

When they were running again, Driver said suddenly, after throwing in a shovelful of coal:

"There's that confounded paper turned up again. I've thrown it away twice, and it always comes back. It seems saying, 'Beware!' to me, and I can't think of anything else."

"Nonsense. Give it to me."

Tom took the paper, crumpled it into a hard wad, and threw it into the fire. They were approaching a deep cut, of considerable extent, when suddenly the same strange feeling of threatened danger, which Tom had before experienced, came over him. He could not account for it, and, believing that it was but a nervous fancy, paid no attention to it for some minutes. Suddenly the feeling grew so upon him that he jumped up and looked out ahead of him.

"By George! There is danger, after all!"

"What's the matter?"

"Look ahead!" cried Tom, his hand on the throttle.

The man looked out and gave utterance to a surprised exclamation. Down the track just ahead of him, Tom could see a red lantern swinging wildly to and fro, though the form of the man who held it was not yet visible. As the broad track of light from the engine lamp extended, however, he could see the man standing in the middle of the track waving the lantern. The train had already slowed up somewhat, and Tom now shoved the throttle full in. Presently the engine came to a full stop, and the man, who had stepped to one side, now advanced close to the step.

"What's the matter?" asked Tom.

"Throw up your hands!"

As these startling words were spoken, several dark figures were seen to suddenly emerge from behind the rocks and bushes at the side of the track. One leaped upon the platform of the mail car, while a second sprang up the steps of the first passenger coach. At the same time a man, closely masked, jumped into the cab, and held a pistol to Driver's head.

"Throw up your hands!" cried the man with the red lantern.

Tom was too stupefied to obey, and with a muttered oath the man suddenly leveled a pistol at his head.

"Stop, stop! Don't injure the boy!" cried a

voice from the darkness, and a new figure came in sight.

"What's the matter, Jack?"

Instantly the truth flashed upon Tom's mind.

The train had been stopped through a false signal by Jack Johnson and his party for purposes of plunder.

"Are you Jack Johnson?"

"I am."

"What do you want?"

"Nothing from you. Just you keep still, and don't interfere with our work, and you won't be hurt."

CHAPTER IV.—Tom Runs Away with Outlaw.

There stood Tom covered by the revolver of the outlaw, Jack Johnson, Driver sitting on his seat utterly helpless, the other outlaws awaiting further orders.

"Here, Dick," cried Johnson, to one of his men, Dick Lidd by name, "you cover this man, while I attend to business. Come, Frank."

Frank Johnson secured the silence of the conductor, standing guard over him, while Clarence Hitt and Charley Kord entered the first passenger car, and "stood up" its occupants. Johnson and Bob Kord then entered the mail car, the whole thing having been done in an instant.

"Put up your hands!"

The mail agent refused this peremptory order and attempted to draw a pistol. Crack! Before he could do so, he was shot in the hip, and fell like a log.

"Get the keys, Bob!" cried Johnson, springing at the express messenger, and making him open his iron safe.

Meanwhile the outlaws in the car had secured several watches, pocketbooks and rings, having made a good haul. One honest fellow, a drover, returning home after a successful trip East, having sold off his cattle and started back with fifteen hundred dollars in his pocket, had no intention of losing it. The instant the train was stopped he knew that something was up. Quicker than a wink he yanked out his pocketbook, and extracted therefrom all his pile with the exception of about fifty dollars. Rolling this large amount up in a compact wad, he dropped it on the floor at his feet in a pool of tobacco juice which he had already made there from his frequent and profuse expectorations. This had no sooner been done than the two outlaws entered, one at each end of the car.

"Shell out, gentlemen!" cried Hitt. "We won't detain you but a minute."

One man had stowed away his money in his boot, and expected to get off; but Hitt choked him till he got black in the face, and was glad to make a spasmodic movement toward his boot leg, which the ruffian quickly understood and secured the booty in an instant.

"Shell out, neighbor!" cried Kord, as he reached the drover. "You ought to have plenty of money, because you look so shabby."

"You can have what I've got and welcome to it, I s'pose, since I can't help myself," growled the man, very reluctantly pulling out his leather wallet, which looked very thin and miserable in-

deed. Kord took it, and, turning it inside out, appropriated the fifty dollars. The pocketbook he threw contemptuously upon the floor under the seat.

"Better than nothing," he growled; "but the next time I meet you if you haven't got more than that I'll make crows'-meat of your carcass."

As he passed on the drover stooped down and muttered to himself:

"Might as well take the wallet home, I s'pose, so if I ever do get any money I'll have suthin' to put it in."

"You can have a bushel of empty wallets for all I care," retorted Kord, "standing up" a big fellow with a huge gold chain and a big diamond.

"Thankee!" muttered the drover, picking up, not the wallet, but the wad of bills, and thrusting it into his pocket.

"A lucky hit, that," he thought, though he was wise enough to say nothing. "I'm willin' to lose fifty to save fifteen centuries every day in the year."

In the meantime Johnson had commanded Tom to start up at once, having already uncoupled the passenger coaches from the mail car. Tom saw nothing for it but to obey, and he opened the throttle and started off, Johnson leaping upon the engine.

"Put on a full head, my boy," said Johnson, taking a position on Tom's high seat. "I'll tell you when to stop."

Tom obeyed, but every now and then he turned about and looked the desperado full in the face, until at last the man, usually cool and self-possessed, asked him what he meant by it.

"I want to get a good look at you," answered Tom boldly, "so that I may know you again. It would give me the greatest pleasure in life to hand you over to the sheriff."

Johnson's brow darkened, and his hand was upon his revolver in a second.

"You'd better not do that," remarked Tom coolly.

"Why not?"

"You couldn't run the engine alone, and my man can't."

Johnson laughed, and put up his weapon, saying lightly:

"Slow up just enough to drop the mail-car behind, and then go on."

Tom put on the brakes, and presently coming to a half-stop, looked questioningly at the outlaw. Johnson left the cab, and running back, pulled out the coupling-pin. The very instant that Tom heard the sound of grating iron, as the pin was withdrawn, he threw open the throttle and dashed ahead at full speed. He had hoped to catch the outlaw between the mail car and tender, and came within an ace of succeeding. Johnson had drawn the pin entirely out, however, and had stepped aside just as the engine started ahead. One leap brought him upon the iron step in the rear of the tender, and another placed him on top of the water tank, and from there he stepped over into the cab.

CHAPTER V.—A Contest of Nerve.

Johnson put the cold muzzle of his revolver close to Tom's temple, and hissed:

"Stop her or I'll scatter your brains to the four winds!"

"Shoot!" answered Tom coolly, one hand still on the throttle, the other on the lever, his body swaying back and forth with the motion, though his feet were planted firmly. The bandit glanced at the steam gauge in front of him. It registered a tremendous pressure, and by the laboring and groaning of the engine, the hissing and sputtering of the steam, the roar and rumble of the fires and of the boilers, he knew that it was more than the engine could stand.

"Shut her off!"

"Put down your pistol!"

"Shut her off, Tom!" cried Driver, falling on his knees. "Would you murder us all? For the love of Heaven, have pity!"

In an instant Tom relented, not because of the outlaw's threat, but because of the frantic prayer of the old man. He turned in the throttle, clapped the lever amidships, and called out huskily:

"Draw the fires, and save yourself. I will not sacrifice you, but for this carrion beside me I don't care the value of a bad cent."

The old fireman was quick to draw the fires, the steam began to reduce in pressure, and though the engine still rushed ahead, despite the brakes and all, the great danger was passed. Jack Johnson returned his revolver to his belt, and, sinking back upon the seat, his forehead reeking with cold sweat, his eyes glazed and staring, said in a constrained tone:

"What made you run such an awful risk, boy?"

"To show Jack Johnson that I am not afraid of him, and that it would be a pleasure to give up my life that the world might be rid of such a villain!"

"You're the coolest hand I've yet seen," muttered Johnson, as they at last began to slow up. "I'd like to have you in the band."

"You might have worse. Look out whom you trust, Jack Johnson, lest you harbor a traitor, and meet with death, even yet, from some one that you now think your friend."

Neither Tom nor the outlaw himself knew how prophetic those words would prove.

"Not another word!" hissed the outlaw. "What town is this you are approaching?" for the lights of some town or city could be seen not far ahead.

"Shingle City, where we make connections. Somebody will be disappointed to-night."

"Let me off just before you reach the station."

"All right; and a good riddance to bad company it will be. I'd advise you as a friend, however, not to remain about here any longer than is absolutely necessary."

"Why do you advise this?"

"Because I mean to spread the news of your coming and presence in the vicinity just as speedily and as far as possible."

By this time they had entered the town, and, with a gesture of impatience, the outlaw signaled for Tom to stop. The latter did so, and, as the hunted man stepped from the cab to the ground, he said hoarsely:

"What prevents me from taking your life now, you impudent young brat?"

"This."

It was Driver who spoke, and his means of prevention was a revolver leveled dead at the scoundrel's head.

"Put up your weapon, my man," said Tom. "Mr. Johnson has too much gratitude to take the life of one who has just foregone the opportunity of sending him to perdition, and cheating the hangman at the same time."

"We'll meet again, my boy, when I promise you that you won't get away so easily!" shouted Johnson.

"Don't trouble yourself, Jack," cried Tom, with a laugh. "Clear the track, for I'm coming."

Then, with a snort and a puff, the engine rushed along the track, and in a few minutes Tom sprang out upon the station platform. Hurrying into the house, he asked for the telegraph operator, but, at that time of night, this gentleman was in bed and asleep.

"Jack Johnson is in town!" announced the boy. "He stopped my train, cut off the passenger coaches, and then the mail car, and came here on the engine. We must send out an alarm."

"What can we do without a telegraph operator?"

"Send somebody to wake him up, and spread the news all up and down the line of the road. I'm going back for my train so as to make up the lost time, if possible. Send word to the superintendent, and tell him why I am late."

Then Tom hurried back to his engine, took in a supply of coal and water, and leaping aboard, opened the throttle, reversed, and sped down the back track, crying:

"Clear the track, for I am going to be on time. Whoop her up, Driver, my man, and send her humming!"

Meanwhile Tom was running back at full speed, keeping a lookout for the mail car, and occasionally blowing the whistle to let the passengers in the abandoned cars know he was coming. When he approached the mail car he slowed up just enough to allow Driver to couple on, and then the trip was continued. In five minutes' time after getting the mail car Tom reached the passenger cars, and found that about one-third of the former occupants had decamped, preferring to make their way across country to remaining in the cars to be perhaps robbed a second time. Those that remained were glad enough to continue their journey, but some of them swore up and down that Tom had been at the bottom of the whole thing, and had left them on the track in order that the outlaws might plunder them.

"Gentlemen, if you knew Tom's reputation on this road you wouldn't utter any such slanders. A fellow that's got pluck enough to dare Jack Johnson to his face isn't the sort of chap that you're talking about," said the conductor.

"Of course he isn't!" spoke up a young lady that was sitting near in company with her grandmother, an old woman of ninety, who was taking her first ride in the cars, and thought that the interruption by the outlaws was part of the regular programme. "Tom Overton, you're a trump, and I don't care who hears me say it."

"You seem to know my name," said Tom, "but I can't say that I have the pleasure of your acquaintance."

"My name is Mattie Marsh, and I live in the same town you do. Everybody knows the youngest engineer on the road, and I think you're just splendid."

"Good-by for the present, Mattie," were his

parting words. "I've got to take you people up to town."

Away he went; hopped upon his engine, and let her drive, doing his best to make up for lost time. Tom arrived just in the nick of time without a second to lose, transferred his passengers, and then rattled on at full speed, so that having to make but few stops, and the runs between them being long, he was able to get into the home station only a trifle late.

CHAPTER VI.—"Standing Up" a Cashier.

There had been a fair in the town near where Tom had let Johnson off, and early that forenoon the robber sauntered off in the direction of the grounds. Jack Johnson was always provided for an emergency, and when he reached the little ticket-seller's box he wore a long linen coat which reached to his heels, and a broad-brimmed white slouch hat, articles which could be put in a small space and easily concealed upon the person. He looked the very picture of a Western farmer or drover as he stepped up, and sticking his nose through the little window, remarked inquiringly: "Putty good show here, yes'day?"

"Fust class," answered the cashier glibly.

"Guess you must ha' took in two or three hundred dollars?"

"Two or three thousand would be nearer the figure. Two days' racket, you know; money just poured in."

"An' ye've got it all in that there black tin box?"

"Now you're shoutin'. There's a little more to come in, but we're pretty well straightened out by this time."

"They do say that Jack Johnson is hangin' around these parts."

"All a hoax, my dear sir; not a word of truth in it."

"S'pose now he should step up to this yer hole, like I'm 'a-doin', an ax ye to hand over that there cash-box, what'd ye say?"

"What would I say? Why, I'd tell him to go to blazes."

"You would, eh?" said the outlaw, suddenly changing his tone and manner. "Well, I'm Jack Johnson; so just hand out that cash-box as quick as you know how!"

The gleaming barrel of a heavy caliber revolver was suddenly thrust right under the man's nose, while the outlaw's disengaged hand reached in for that cash-box. The cashier fell back in his seat as if shot, and then made a bolt for the door, and out upon the race track, leaving that cash-box behind, evidently caring less for that than he did for his life. Slipping the prize under his arm, Johnson was out again and outside the gate just as the alarm was given, and a crowd of people came swarming toward him.

Early that afternoon Tom determined to call upon Mattie—the young lady whose acquaintance he had made the day before—and spend a pleasant hour or two in her company before going out with his train. He was the more readily induced to do this from having received a very kind note from the young girl herself, inviting him to call

at his earliest convenience. Dressing himself up more smartly than usual, Tom sallied out shortly after dinner, his heart bounding with joyful emotions, and without a care to harass him. He had gone about fifteen minutes when he suddenly came upon Frank Flash, his former friend, the fast young man about town.

"Hello, Tom! Where are you bound?"

"Going to make a call."

"Upon a daisy, I'll bet! You wouldn't be togged up so if you weren't."

"If you mean a young lady, you are quite right."

"Any one I know?"

"I hope not, for her sake," thought Tom. "I don't know, I'm sure," he added aloud. "The young lady's name is Marsh."

"Well, well; you're in luck. She is a daisy, and no mistake. Lots of rocks. By George! I've nothing to do. I believe I'll go with you. Mattie and I are old friends."

He submitted to Frank's accompanying him with ill-concealed annoyance, which the young fellow either could not or would not see, but insisted on going along.

"I know a short cut, Tom," he remarked, after they had begun to ascend the rising ground in the rear of the town.

"I'm in no hurry," answered Tom. "I'd just as lief go the regular way."

"It'll give you all the longer visit."

That suggestion settled the matter, and Tom turned down a side street which the other pointed out. They presently reached the mouth of a tunnel—low, dark, and smelling of smoke and sulphurous vapors, which had evidently got caught there and could not find the way out.

"What a place!" said Tom; "no light, no air-holes. I could think a man would suffocate in there."

"Oh, that's nothing when you get used to it."

"They do say that robberies, and even worse crimes, have been committed there."

"All nonsense! The place is safe enough. You're not afraid, I hope?"

"Afraid?" retorted Tom, half in anger. "What do you take me for?"

"Then come ahead."

They had taken about twenty steps and were well shrouded in the awful gloom of the place, when there came a sudden rush of footsteps from some hidden vein in the tunnel. Tom felt himself seized from behind, while a hand was placed over his mouth, and something cold and terribly suggestive of a violent death pressed to his temple.

"Betrayed!" he thought; "and to whom? Can this young reprobate be a tool of that ruffian Johnson?"

"We've got you, young fellow!" hissed a voice, the owner at the same time clapping a gag into Tom's mouth, while some one seized his hands, drew them in front of him, and pinioned the wrists securely.

"That was cleverly done, Dick," muttered a new voice. "The young scamp will never defy Jack Johnson again, I take it."

"You bet!" was the answer. "We haven't much time, so let's be quick about it. It'll be here soon."

What could those words mean?

"That letter was a good dodge," muttered the

first man, as Tom suddenly found himself thrown on his face on the cold ground, his hands stretched out before him. "Nothing could have caught so well as that bait."

The letter, then, was a mere decoy, intended to entrap him, but in that case could Mattie have written it? He could not, would not, believe this. Suddenly his arms were stretched out, and he felt his wrists pressing against some cold surface. His hands had been placed across the iron rails of the railroad track. He was not to be killed, then, but maimed—crippled for life, deprived of the only means of making a livelihood of which he was wholly capable. It was the train that would soon be there, and as he realized this his brain grew faint and giddy with terror. Hark! It is the signal of the approaching train; there is but a single track in the tunnel, and his fate is assured. Nearer and nearer it comes, as he knows by the sound, and now in the distance he sees the faint glimmer of the headlight and abandons all hope.

CHAPTER VII.—A Timely Rescue.

The monster is all but upon him, and no help is near! They have not seen him, they will not see him; he will be maimed and crippled and useless for the rest of his life. Then, when he has abandoned all hope, and expects that the next moment will be his last, he feels something tugging at his bonds. The sudden rush of blood tells him that his bonds are loosened! He hears a grating sound as of steel clashing against stone, he feels himself dragged violently away, and then, as he is supported in a half upright position, sees the train go whirling by with a rush and a cloud of dust and smoke. Then he becomes unconscious and knows nothing until he sees the blue sky above him, breathes the pure air of the outer world, and hears the busy hum of life going on all around him. He is sitting on a bench in the little park on top of the hill—the tunnel runs under it—while by his side, holding his hand, is his old friend Driver.

"Do you feel all right now, Tom?" asks the man. "Thank Heaven, I was in time!"

"It was you that saved me from being——"

"Made a cripple for life. Yes, it was nobody else. I suspected some villainy when I saw you go into the place."

"How did you know——"

"You left that lying letter in the room. When I went for you, I found it. I suspected something and followed. Luckily I saw you in time, and hurried. I had to hide till the villains got by, and then I learned what their intentions were."

"And Frank Flash?"

"I saw him hurrying away as if Satan was after him. He was in it, though. Oh, Tom, how could you be so deceived?"

"Do you dare say that Mattie had aught to do——"

"She? No, indeed; but didn't you know that she was at the other end of the road?"

"But how should Jack Johnson know that her name would lead me into a trap?"

"I don't believe he had anything to do with it,

for most likely he isn't within fifty miles of the town. There is somebody who has a grudge against you, and this is a plot of their making."

"Why should they have a grudge? Whom have I ever injured?"

"I can't tell you, Tom; but beware of that fellow Flash. He is bad from the start, and will do you an injury if he can."

"By George, pop, if he don't make it mighty clear to me how he happened to be around to-day when I met him, I'll give him the worst thrashing he ever had, and I'm no baby with my fists, let me tell you."

"The fight in the machine shop with Flash made that plain enough."

"Why, how did you know about that, pop? I never told you of it."

"Everybody knows it in St. Louis."

"I never saw you there."

"I used to see you often, and have heard more than once of the doings of John Overton's Tom."

"He's been like a father to me, pop."

"I'll be another father to you, Tom, when John Overton is not about. If I hadn't been in time to-day, I should never have forgiven myself."

"Suppose we go back to the house? I feel strong enough now, though after you picked me up from the track I was just like a wet rag."

"No wonder, for after it was all over I felt used up myself."

"It's funny that I didn't have any presentiment of danger. By the way, I'd like to know who it was that threw the stone in the window last night."

"A friend, I suppose. You're sure to find 'em somehow or other, Tom."

When they reached the town again Tom took a long rest before starting out for the night, so as to be in good condition for the night's ride. At the usual time the night express started, and nothing extraordinary occurred before they reached the terminus.

CHAPTER VIII.—Tom Sees New Kind of Piano.

Here they had to wait an hour or two, and would then return, Tom usually spending this time in the waiting room getting the news of the town from the waiters in the restaurant and from the telegraph operators and train men, some of whom were always loitering around.

"I'm confoundedly hungry," said the young engineer, "and I believe I'll give the cook my order for a beefsteak. Say, Jim," to one of the attendants in the dining room, "order me a good steak, broiled, not too well done nor too rare, and some fried potatoes."

"All right. I'll tell the cook they're for you, and he'll set you out a dish fit for a king. He has taken quite a shine to you."

A few minutes later, while Tom was talking to his comrades, a telegraph boy brought in a message.

"Who is Tom Overton?" asked the lad.

"Here he is. What do you want of him?"

"Got a telegraph for him."

"A telegram, you mean, don't you?"

"Ah, what's the odds? S'pose you get your picture took, do you call that a photogram? What are you giving us?"

"Two nickels for your smartness," replied Tom, with a laugh, dropping two five-cent pieces into the lad's extended hand, and taking out the message.

The boy skipped off with a chuckle, and Tom, tearing open the envelope, took out the blank and hastily scanned it. It purported to be from the assistant superintendent of the road, and read as follows:

"Thomas Overton, Engineer:

"Come up and see me immediately at the Occidental Hotel, Room 1. Have an important matter to communicate.

"ELLIOTT, Ass't Sup't."

"Well, pop, you'll have to get away with my supper for me," said Tom, a moment later to the old fireman.

"What's up? Lost your appetite?"

"No; but Elliott is in a sweat about something and wants to see me right off. There's the message. I'll be back in time to run the train, maybe before that. I've told Jim it's all right. Just you pitch into the grub, for it'd be a pity to waste it. Just my luck to be called away when I'd got my mouth all made up for a nice lot of hot waffles. Good-by. See you later."

Away went Tom, muffled up to the throat, for the night was chilly and the wind brisk and keen. Arrived at the Occidental, he noticed a carriage standing in front of it, and passed in, going at once to the office.

"Mr. Elliott upstairs?" he inquired of the clerk.

"Didn't you meet him outside? He's in the carriage, waiting. He's got to go somewhere, I believe, and he told me to tell you——"

Tom stepped outside, and as he approached the carriage, the driver jumped lightly to the pavement.

"This is Engineer Overton?"

"Yes."

"I'll take you to Mr. Elliott. He's been obliged to go to his office. Jump in, sir."

He swung open the door and Tom got in, the carriage lamps not having been lighted, the blinds being drawn also, which, when the door was shut, made the place as dark as a pocket. Tom thought nothing of this, however, and was kept busy with his thoughts until the cab suddenly stopped, the door was thrown open, and the driver stood before him.

"This way, sir!"

Tom had barely touched the sidewalk when two shadowy forms suddenly sprang out from the darkness and seized him, pinioning his arms and thrusting a gag in his mouth with the quickness of thought. The driver leaped upon his box, and lashing his horses furiously drove off at a gallop, while Tom's captors hurried him into a house close at hand, the door being closed behind them noiselessly. Much surprised at this treatment, Tom was taken to a room in the rear on the first story, and bound to a chair, the gag being then taken from his mouth, and the gas turned up so that he could see everything distinctly. There was not much, the room being plainly furnished, having an inlaid floor of colored woods with tinted walls and ceiling, a few pictures, one or two chairs, a small black sofa,

an upright piano, and a small round table. The men wore black masks over their faces, but before Tom could examine their clothing so as to be able to identify it, they suddenly left the room, closing the door behind them. Hearing a noise behind him, Tom turned his head quickly, but saw nothing.

"Well?" said a voice in front.

He turned and beheld a tall, strongly built man standing near, regarding him with a fierce look.

How the man had entered was a mystery.

"Who are you? What place is this? Why am I bound? What do you want with me?" asked the boy rapidly.

"I want your signature."

"What for?"

"That is my business."

"Then I will sign nothing."

"We shall see," the latter being spoken with terrible earnestness.

Then he touched a knob in the front panel of the piano, and the end panel suddenly opened from top to bottom and flew back against the wall. The next move was to lift the cover, displaying what seemed to be an ordinary keyboard, with the regular black and white notes. The man then suddenly pushed Tom's chair to the opening on the side of the piano, and bade him examine it. At a height of two feet from the floor was an iron frame, with one round socket at the farther end and two at the near, besides two concave strips of iron running across at the middle, about six inches apart. Above and below there seemed to be a great number of levers running diagonally up and down, and all connecting with the keyboard.

"Now, wait until I play you a tune," said the stranger quietly.

Sitting in front of the instrument, Tom saw him strike a dozen keys in rapid succession, but heard no sound.

"Look inside."

Tom looked inside, and the man ran his fingers over the keys from top to bottom. As he did so, Tom saw a number of sharp knives ascend and descend, all striking directly over the oblong frame. The whole horror of the hideous idea swept over Tom in a second. The supposed piano was an instrument of torture. A man, strapped to that iron frame, could be punctured all over his body, in front and behind, with these keen knives, or in one part alone, at the will of the demon at the keyboard.

"Would you like to have me play you a tune?" asked the man, with the most fiendish suavity. "You will not be gagged, and will be allowed the full use of your vocal powers. Oh, it will be a rare concert, I assure you!"

CHAPTER IX.—Tom Hears Piano Play Tune.

"Demon!" cried Tom, with flashing eyes, "are you a man that you speak thus? What is your purpose in showing me this fiendish invention?"

"To show you what I can do to break down your obstinacy."

"What do you require of me?"

"Only your signature. That given, you will be

allowed to depart in perfect safety, and no harm will ever come to you thereafter."

"What do you want me to sign?"

"It matters not."

"I will sign nothing that I don't know the nature of. Besides, I am a minor, and my signature is worth nothing."

The man bit his lip angrily, stamped his foot, and pressing a knob set into the wall under one of the pictures, cried hoarsely:

"I will show you what I can do, and we will see then if you dare refuse."

In a few seconds a man suddenly appeared, the entrance by which he had come in closing quickly behind him.

"Bring in your prisoner," the other cried. "The time has come."

The man stepped quickly to the other side of the room, and when Tom turned his head he had disappeared, leaving no trace to show where he had gone. In a few minutes the two masked men appeared, bearing between them a third man enveloped in a long black cloak. The principal pointed to the instrument. At a signal from the stranger the man was lifted up, laid upon the iron frame, and strapped securely to it, when it was pushed into its place, one of the men making a motion as if to close the end panel of the instrument.

"No," said the chief quickly. "Leave it open. I desire that this youth shall hear the tune with full volume. You may go."

Then the men withdrew, and as Tom looked on in speechless terror the other sat down and touched four or five keys simultaneously. Instantly the sharp knives pierced the victim's body above and beneath, and he uttered a cry of pain, which echoed and re-echoed through the room. Then the human fiend ran his fingers over the board, avoiding those keys which in a piano produce the bass notes, and at every touch the unfortunate creature inside uttered a howl of agony.

"Mercy!" he cried, in anguish. "Have you no pity? Kill me at once, if you will, but for Heaven's sake end this torture!"

"Monster!" cried Tom, turning away his head, though some terrible fascination forced him to look once more upon the ghastly sight.

"Mercy!" screamed the victim, as a dozen knives cut into his flesh.

But the fiend continued his diabolical work for some minutes longer, Tom closing his eyes to shut out the horrible vision. The man's screams began to grow fainter, and now the villain at the instrument cried suddenly:

"Now to end this tune and get ready for another!"

Tom's eyes flew open in spite of himself, and he gazed, fascinated, upon the awful sight. The knives descended upon the throat and heart of the victim, and the frightful butchery was at an end. The man was dead. Then with a cruel smile upon his face, the murderer closed over the keyboard, and, rising, shut the end panel and hid the ghastly object within from sight.

"You see what I can do," he said quietly. "Judge, then, whether I will be content with a refusal. What do you say? Do you consent?"

At that moment there came a terrible pounding at the walls. The man touched a knob, and a

panel was opened instantly afterward, the two men hurrying in unmasked.

"The friends of this man have got upon your track!" cried one. "They are even now at the door with the police."

"Discovery is imminent," gasped the other. "We must fly while there is yet time."

"One moment," muttered the chief, and with that he pressed a spring in the side of the lounge.

Instantly the top fell down upon hinges without a sound, disclosing an opening two feet square which led down, apparently, to a great depth. Then the man touched a button set in the end of the supposed piano, and a rushing sound as of water was heard, lasting for several moments. Then the end of the instrument was opened, the dead body taken out, and the straps having been loosened, it was thrown down the opening, after which the top of the lounge was restored, the instrument of death closed up, the cover of the keyboard locked, and everything put again in order, there being nothing to denote what a fearful tragedy had but recently been enacted. Drawing Tom's chair to a certain part of the room, near the wall, the chief stood beside it, and pressed a hidden spring near his hand. Instantly that portion of the floor sank out of sight, carrying Tom and his persecutor with it, returning presently to its place empty. An hour later Tom suddenly found himself in a strange street, near the station, knowing not how he came there, how long he had been there, and seemingly forgetful of everything that had happened since leaving his friend to go to the hotel.

CHAPTER X.—Tom Meets Two Old Friends.

Half an hour after Tom's departure Driver was surprised to see Mr. Elliott, the assistant superintendent, enter the waiting room alone.

"Have you seen him?" asked Driver.

"Seen whom?"

"Tom. You sent for him, you know."

"I never sent for him. I came now to tell him about his trip to-morrow."

Driver produced the telegram and showed it to the gentleman, the latter exhibiting much surprise.

"I don't live at the Occidental. I was never there in my life; it isn't a fit place for any gentleman. I never sign myself 'Elliott, Ass't Sup't'; the thing is a hoax. Where is Tom now?"

"Heaven only knows. This is some horrid plot!" cried the poor man, remembering the former attempt upon Tom's life.

"Somebody has got a grudge against him," he continued, "and this is a plot to get him off and make away with him."

"We will go to the Occidental at once," cried the other. "My carriage is at the door."

They drove off rapidly, and were soon in conversation with the clerk. There was no Mr. Elliott stopping there, he said, but a gentleman giving that name had called that evening, and asked him to tell whoever called to step to his carriage. He remembered telling Tom, but saw nothing of him afterward. Tom could not be found. At the end of an hour a message came from Tom himself, saying that he was safe, and

was waiting for them in the depot. When they found him he appeared to be dazed; did not know where he had been, nor how long he had been absent; did not remember going away; did not know how he came to be in the street; did not know that his friends were anxious about him until the waiter in the railroad dining saloon had told him.

He remembered the other events of the evening, but as to what had happened after arriving at the terminus, he had no recollection whatever. Driver made Tom eat a hearty supper and drink a great deal of coffee, which had the effect of brightening him up and making him appear himself again, but though he laughed and joked in his old way, he made no allusion to the events of the night, and the other did not question him further concerning them. After a while Driver insisted upon Tom going to bed, which he did, awaking very much better in the morning. Driver was at his bedside when he awoke, and turning to him, Tom said:

"Pop, I want you to tell me if this is a dream or not," and then Tom told him all that happened during that time which had hitherto been a blank.

"It must be a reality, Tom. The drug that this fellow gave you took away your senses for an hour or so, and in that time you had, doubtless, been put into the street and had wandered about aimlessly. After that you could remember nothing of what had happened just previously. Would you know the house again if you saw it?"

"No; but tell me do you know this man—this demon?"

"I think so. He is your deadly foe, and mine. His name is Wolf Destey."

"Why did he want my signature?"

"I must not tell you, Tom; not now. Some day I may."

"I will remember this villain, and——"

"No, no; do not seek to avenge yourself. It will be worse than useless!"

Tom saw that the old man was troubled about something, and so wisely changed the subject. After hanging around all day, they started out upon their usual night's journey. Tom said nothing, and Driver talked but little, so that the run was a quiet one, and devoid of interest until they had passed Shingle City. Here it began to rain quite hard, and threatened to continue for some time, the water pouring down in perfect sheets, running from the cab roof in torrents, making the rails slippery, and causing no end of discomfort. At the next station, just as they were starting out, a man, dripping wet from head to foot, suddenly sprang into the cab, and taking a seat at the side, said coolly:

"I want to get dry. If I don't, I'll catch my death of cold."

"Better look out you don't catch cold in your cheek," said Driver sententiously; "it would take you off sure if you did."

"You wouldn't want me to go all dripping into the passenger coaches, would you?"

"I don't know as this cab is a drying-room, for all that. However, I'm not going to stop to put you off now, so you can sit where you are till we get to the next town."

"Thank you."

"Don't mention it," retorted Tom dryly. "Appropriated favors require no thanks."

"I've got a bottle of some hot stuff if you'd like a drink."

"Take some yourself and warm your icy cheek."

The stranger took out a bottle and held it up, Driver leaning forward to examine the label. The other suddenly pulled out the cork and clapped the bottle under the fireman's nose. He gasped and choked, and in a moment fell forward on the floor of the cab all in a heap. Tom heard the sound and turned quickly, just as the man was about to put the bottle to the boy's face. He caught the faintest whiff of some potent drug and in an instant his suspicions were aroused. With one hand he dashed the flask from the man's grasp, and sent it flying out into the darkness. With the other he whipped off the man's slouched hat and tore away his cloak.

"Wolf Destey!" he exclaimed, in surprise.

It was the demon who had so nearly put him to the torture the previous night.

"Let go your hold, you little imp!" hissed the other, striking at Tom's face.

Tom planted a blow on the other's forehead which broke the skin and left a deep mark which would probably never be effaced. The man grappled with his young enemy, and both reeled dangerously near the edge of the cab.

"I'd as lief throw you out as not!" hissed Tom. "I owe you one, as it is, for your work of last night."

The rain was pouring down now in literal torrents, the air being like a sheet of water. The rails were like glass, and the engine, left to itself, was rushing on at a frightful speed. There was a sharp curve not far ahead, and if the speed were not checked there was great danger that the train would be derailed. The villain had seized Tom about the waist, and was dragging him toward the step, seeming to care little whether he was killed if Tom only shared the same fate. The boy succeeded in getting one hand loose by a great exertion, and with this he seized the guard-rail at the side. Then he swung the villain around and sent him flying off the train. However, the man is gone for the present, and Tom now turns and lifts Driver to his seat, the man beginning to recover consciousness.

"How did I come here?" he asked suddenly.

"That villain Destey, used his infernal drug, but I've settled him. I left him rolling down the bank a few minutes ago."

"Ah, Tom, until that fellow is dead he will always bring you trouble."

After this there was nothing more of interest, the rain ceasing by the time they had reached the terminus. Tom set the police on the man's track the next day, but nothing could be learned; his body was not found, and as Tom could not tell the location of the house where he had been taken, there seemed to be no chance of unearthing the villain if he was alive. The police knew the house if Tom didn't, for they had traced the victim of the missing man there, and had already made a thorough search. Everything appeared innocent enough, and the police had departed, thinking that they must have made a mistake.

The next day, however, Tom told of the "piano" and other diabolical inventions, and the place was once more searched. A bona fide piano was found and all was as innocent as you please, nothing being wrong, although Destey himself did not put

in an appearance. Tom's story was looked upon as the creation of a disordered imagination, and the police gave up the search. A week after that Tom was suddenly sent for by Fred Hurlbut to meet him at the Big Pine station, in the town where our hero lived.

"I want you to run my train to-day, Tom," he said. "You will have to leave in half an hour. You can't get back in time to take your own train, but I'll be free then, and I'll take it out. Driver knows me, and it will be all right. Business of a private nature prevents my going out, but I said I'd get a substitute."

"I'll go and welcome, Fred," said Tom, and in an hour thereafter he was bowling along the Big Pine road at full speed.

He passed through that tunnel where he had before had such a narrow escape, and later on crossed his own road, and was reminded of his recent adventure with the Johnson gang, who had not been heard of in the neighborhood since that night. When Tom reached the terminus of the Big Pine he had about four hours to wait before taking his train back. An engineer of a later train, however, had just come into the office, and wanted to be excused from going on his train that night on account of the death of a relative.

"Couldn't you take this man's train, Mr. Overton?" asked the dispatcher. "It will give you two hours longer in town. We can get an extra man to take Hurlbut's train back, but this late train is a fast express, and we can't trust it with any but experienced men."

"Do you think that——"

"Oh, you're all right," said the other. "Scott, of your road, has told me all about you, and I know that John Overton wouldn't recommend any one that wasn't first rate."

"Then, if you are satisfied, I'll take the later train."

"Good! You haven't seen Johnson lately, I suppose? I've heard of that last exploit of yours, the time they cut the wires of our branch line. You acted nobly that night."

"I've not seen him for a week and over. It would be too much luck to see him every night."

So the matter was settled, and Tom telegraphed to Fred that he would not be back until a later train. At night Tom got aboard, and noticed that his fireman did not seem to fancy the idea of a mere boy running a train, and began to make suggestions, and tell him what he ought to do.

"I may not be as old as you, my friend," replied Tom, "but if I don't know as much and more about running an engine I'll eat my shirt. Why, I could build a locomotive, if I liked, and I don't suppose you know a monkey-wrench from a piston-rod."

"Don't you be too cheeky," retorted the other. "We don't allow no boys to sass men on this road, even if they do on the Deep Valley. You'll get chucked off if you don't look sharp."

"Not by you," said Tom, with a grin, as he settled back on his seat and glided along the track.

Half an hour later, when they were passing through a lonely region, Tom suddenly saw a red light on the track ahead of him.

"Hallo! There's danger ahead," he muttered, slowing up.

"No, there ain't," answered the big fireman sulkily. "There is an extra train ahead of us, and that's a fellow put there to tell us about it."

"You seem to know all about it ahead of time. What's the use of danger signals if they have such smart firemen?"

Tom slowed up, and presently came to a man standing at the side of the track with a red lantern in his hand. He was dressed and looked like a brakeman, and said to Tom as he came up:

"Special train ahead of you, engineer. They left me to tell you about it. Take me aboard."

Tom suddenly started when he heard that voice and seizing a lantern, flashed it in the face of the strange brakeman.

"By George! I should know you in spite of your disguise!" he cried.

"Tom Overton! What in thunder are you doing on this road?"

"Jack Johnson, as I'm a sinner!"

Then Tom sprang to the throttle to start the train ahead. The big fireman interrupted him, and tried to push him from the cab. At the same moment a sharp whistle was heard, and instantly answered from several quarters. Then four or five shadowy forms appeared, hastening toward the train.

"So you are in the plot, too," cried Tom to the fireman. "I'm not afraid, and it's not likely that you're going to frighten me."

Then he let fly with his right and took the big fellow under the chin. Over he went out of the cab, just as Johnson was about to spring in.

CHAPTER XI.—The Outlaw Takes a Plunge.

When Tom struck the fireman, who he was now convinced was in the plot to stop the train, the fellow was hurled headfirst out of the cab. He landed upon the outlaw's shoulders, and brought him to the ground in a heap. Tom at once flew to his post and opened wide the throttle. The laboring of the engine, the escape of the steam, the short, sharp toot of the whistle, the clanging of the bell, and the shriek of defiance which Tom blew off, all combined to make a great din, in the midst of which, with a cloud of smoke and cinders, the train began to move off at a rapidly accelerating speed. Crack! Crack! Crack! The shots of the outlaws rattled all around the brave lad. Some of them went crashing through the glass, others tore into the woodwork, flattening against the steel and iron of the engine, or went whistling harmlessly through the air, falling to the ground when their force had been spent.

"Don't let him escape!" cried Johnson, as he made a dash for the iron step leading into the cab.

Frank Johnson and Bob Kord sprang toward the open door of the mail car, the former getting a hold, but the latter missing. The conductor was in the car, however, and it had not taken him two seconds to know that something was wrong. He apprehended at once that the train was to be plundered by railroad robbers. Whether by Jack Johnson or not, was nothing to him. When Frank Johnson landed just on the edge of the car, he

bounded toward him, and, clapping a revolver to the outlaw's head, exclaimed savagely:

"Get out of here, you miserable skunk, or I'll shoot the whole top of your head off!"

Frank needed no second invitation, but rolled off and went spinning down the bank, receiving many bruises, but no serious hurts. One of the outlaws sent in a flying shot, however, which took the brave conductor full in the forehead and stretched him lifeless on the floor of the car. The train had been going faster and faster every second, and it now fairly flew down the road, leaving the discomfited outlaws far behind, uttering bitter curses, and firing ineffectual shots after it. Not all were left behind, however. The leader of the band of lawless desperadoes had succeeded in placing his foot on the iron step, and in seizing the perpendicular guard-rail running alongside the entrance. For a moment his body swayed back and forth as the train swept on with lightning speed. Then he leaped into the cab and drew a bead on Tom. The brave boy's gleaming weapon met his gaze at that very instant.

"Put that down or I'll shoot, you young imp of Satan!"

"Put up your pop or I'll fire, you past master of crime!"

One hand on the lever, the other holding the weapon of death, Tom stood boldly facing his desperate opponent, giving him a look of defiance such as Jack Johnson did not often encounter.

"What are you doing on this road?" asked the outlaw, holding his weapon in readiness, but still forbearing to fire.

That stern look of the boy told him that Tom was willing to die if he could at the same time compass the outlaw's death.

"Can't you see what I'm doing? Running an engine same as I always do."

"You don't belong on this road."

"I'm here, at all events, and mighty lucky, too, for a stranger wouldn't have known you, and you'd have been able to carry out your lawless plans. I didn't take a good long look at you for nothing that first night you stopped me."

"You'll have to stop soon, for you've no fireman, and if you leave your place I'll collar you, and if you don't, the engine will stop for lack of fuel."

"I'll have to quit, will I, eh?" said Tom, with a sneer, and then seizing the cord over his head, he pulled it vigorously, and set the bell to ringing. In an instant thereafter he had given the danger signal with the whistle. At once every brakeman sprang to his post. One appeared on the front platform of the mail car, just in the rear of the tender.

"Hello!" cried Tom, "I've got Jack Johnson in the cab here. Come over, two or three of you, and collar him."

"You young demon!" hissed the outlaw, turning toward Tom.

"No, you don't! If you come any nearer, I'll shoot. If you turn around I'll shoot. I say there!"

"All right; we're coming!" yelled the brakeman, who had stepped inside to call assistance. "Where is your fireman?"

"I left him behind because he was in the plot."

At this moment they ran upon a bridge across

a stream of considerable size. It was open; the spaces at the side of the track, between the sleepers, being wide enough to allow of a man jumping through. The altered sound told the young engineer that they had left the solid road-bed temporarily. The brakeman would return in a few moments. Tom was still resolute, and the outlaw saw that to fire upon him would be but to risk his own life. This he was not prepared to do at present, particularly when the risk was so great as in the present instance. He must escape, and that at once. The slightest delay would be dangerous.

"The river!" he thought; "that is fortunate."

Instantly, before Tom could divine his intentions, he made one leap across the cab. He reached the side opposite that by which he had entered. Then he sprang far out from the train. He cleared the sleepers, and went plunging down toward the rushing waters beneath. For an instant Tom saw his flying form by the light which poured from the car windows. Then it disappeared in the darkness. He did not hear the splash on account of the noise he made in crossing the bridge, but he knew that there was now nothing to prevent the outlaw from falling safely into the water, all obstacles having been cleared.

"Well!" he muttered, "I didn't think of that, but then I knew nothing of the river. He's gone, anyhow, and I'm glad of it."

CHAPTER XII.—The Open Switch.

With the disappearance of Jack Johnson, Tom thought that his troubles were over for the night. They had scarcely begun, in fact, and many more were to follow. About fifteen miles farther down the road from where Tom had got rid of the outlaw, or rather where the latter had left him, was a place called Greenback Mills, where the night train did not stop. For the accommodation of the owners of the mills, a siding was in process of construction, some two hundred feet of it being already completed. A bank had had to be built in order to make the proper grade, and all the land over which the siding would cross had not yet been filled in. The work of making the bed and laying the rails had been carried on simultaneously, however, so that the switch line might be used in part, as fast as it was finished, it being a great advantage to the Mills people in shipping their productions. The siding, therefore, suddenly and abruptly came to an end right on the edge of a gully some twenty feet in depth and twice as wide. A culvert had to be built, and this work had been behind the other, for although the road was nearly completed beyond this gap, the two parts could not be joined until this latter was filled in. This night, as Tom was bowling along the road, three men were gathered at the switch, engaged in earnest conversation.

"Can you pick the lock?"

"I think so."

"Never mind it," put in the third; "can't you smash the thing and then shift it?"

"Yes, and have it show afterward. If the thing is done right it will look like carelessness."

"And the switch-tender will get the blame."

"Exactly."

"Won't it be ripping to see the engine go tearing over into the gully, and all the cars piling one on top of the other after it?"

"And that young cuss in the middle of the wreck. The boiler will bust up, sure enough."

"Them's the orders, though; we're to get rid of him."

"But I don't quite understand," muttered the second. "He wasn't to be killed outright, was he?"

"The boss said to run the train off the track, and I don't see how he's going to get away."

"That settles it, then. Hallo! Have you got it open?"

"Yes."

There was evidently some deep-laid plot on foot, of which Tom was to be the victim. The three ruffians were going to leave the switch open. The train would be thrown from the track, and not only Tom's life sacrificed, but many more besides. Was this a plot of the outlaws of Jack Johnson? It could hardly be possible. In fact, the man, bad as he was, had nothing whatever to do with it, neither he nor any of his band, for he had been ignorant of Tom's presence on the road, and this last piece of mischief was aimed at the young fellow directly. His secret enemies had been at work again, and, having discovered his temporary change of base, this act was of their doing.

"H'm, I've got it clear," muttered one of the men, who had for some minutes been fumbling at the switch-lock with the aid of a dark-lantern. He had picked the lock at last, and after that it was but the work of a moment to change the switch. Now, when Tom came along, not suspecting any danger, he would, instead of keeping upon the main line, be suddenly diverted from his proper course, and before he could know of his danger, being unacquainted with the road, be hurled from the track.

"Good!" hissed one of the plotters. "I reckon that will settle his accounts."

"Hark! What is that?"

"The train. It will be here in five minutes."

"Let's get out of the way, then; it won't do to be found hanging around here."

"We can easily come up after the thing is over. The noise will arouse the whole village."

The three men hurried off into the darkness; and now the headlight of Tom's engine could be seen approaching in the distance. Three minutes passed and then the whistle was heard announcing the coming of the train. At that moment, when the shrill sound echoed again and again through the hills, a dark form rapidly neared the switch.

"Have they then abandoned their fiendish work?" he asked himself. "I see no one."

His face shrouded, and the long, heavy coat he wore made it impossible to tell the proportions of his figure, whether large or small. In the glare of light might be seen the gleam of a revolver which he held firmly in his hand as he came on. As he reached the switch he glanced up the track, and then the open switch met his gaze.

"By Heaven, the villains have completed their work! Am I then too late?"

He threw himself upon the lever and discovered that it had not been locked, an oversight on

the part of the ruffians in their hurry to get away. The train was now almost upon him, and whatever was to be done must be the work of an instant, or all would be lost. Once the switch was closed, and the rails put in their proper place, Tom was safe. Let it remain open but a moment and he was doomed.

"Thank Heaven, I am here to save him once more," muttered the mysterious one.

Seizing the lever, he brought it over sharply to the right. Click! The rails were in place, the lever was secured. Not a second too soon. Tom, glancing out at the little window by his side, saw a man standing by the switch, who waved a white handkerchief at him as he passed. Over the smooth rails he whirled with a roar and a rush, knowing not how near he had been to destruction, nor by what a narrow margin had he been saved from a horrible death. Once more his mysterious friend had interfered to prevent the doom which threatened from falling, but Tom, all unconscious of this, stood at his post and chatted gayly with one of the brakemen that had come to help him out, it being too much to expect of him to run his engine and fire for it at the same time. The three ruffians waited in vain for the crash, for the explosion, for the rush of steam, the crash of broken coaches, the screams of the injured, and the confusion consequent upon the expected catastrophe; but everything remained as it had been. In the distance they could hear the shriek of the engine growing fainter, could see clouds of smoke lit up by the headlight, these, too, disappearing as the sounds died away, and then they began to suspect that something had gone wrong with their plans. Then they returned to the switch. It was in its proper place, and was securely fastened.

"If I hadn't been sure that we left it open, I'd think I was asleep," muttered the leader.

"Somebody has interfered with the business, and the boss'll have to catch on to a new plan that'll work better than the old one."

"Well, he's got away, and there's no use staying about here; so let's skip."

Tom, flying along the road, saw a red light waving to and fro ahead of him, and debated with himself whether he had better stop or not.

"Pshaw!" he muttered impatiently, "Jack Johnson can't be everywhere at once. I left him in the river twenty miles and more behind. What am I afraid of?"

Then he slackened his speed and stopped, and the man with the lantern, whom he had passed, came up and said hurriedly:

"The bridge over Sandy Run is in a bad condition, and the last man that went over it has telegraphed that he felt it shake under him. There is no time to repair it to-night, and we have only just got the message."

"How far ahead is this bridge?"

"Seven or eight miles. It is not over fifty feet in length, but should it break beneath you there would be a fall of two hundred feet."

"I remember seeing it when I came down this morning. I'll keep on the safe side, you may be sure."

Away went Tom again, and when he had made half the distance to the bridge, he put on extra speed, spinning over the rails like lightning.

"What are you doing?" asked the fireman.

"How do you know that the bridge is still standing?"

"I can tell if it is or not in time. In a case like this it is better to go flying over than to go slow; there is less chance of an accident."

CHAPTER XIII.—Two Narrow Escapes.

Half a mile before they reached the bridge over Sandy Run, Tom could see its white trusses shining in the moonlight.

"It's there yet," he murmured laconically.

"I see it is."

"And I'm going across it," after saying which Tom clapped on all the steam he could stand, and told his man to pile in the coal until he was told to stop. It was a straight run to the bridge, and as the fires roared and hissed, the engine puffing and snorting, the steam escaping in great volumes from the safety valve, Tom's heart beat wildly, for he knew that he was taking a great risk.

"Dick!" shouted Tom to a brakeman standing on the front platform of the mail car.

"Well?"

"Any one on the last car?"

"Not more than one or two. It's a smoker, and the fire has gone out. There's only half a dozen in the next car; but after that, they're tolerably full."

"Jump up on the roof and run along to the last car. Get all the passengers in those two into the third from the end, and then uncouple if you can, Hurry!"

The man knew that something was up, and he obeyed on the instant without a question.

"When that's done, give me a single pull on the cord," called out Tom, as the man leaped upon the car-roof.

"All right," and away he went.

They were rapidly approaching the bridge, being less than an eighth of a mile away, when Tom received the signal. In a few moments he heard the brakeman calling him.

"Well?"

"We've unloosed 'em. The passengers grumbled a bit at being changed; but I told 'em we'd have to drop 'em off if they didn't, and then they hustled out of that in a jiffy."

"Hold on, all!" cried Tom. "In one minute we shall either be safe or there'll be nothing more to trouble us!"

Then they reached the bridge, Tom having got up a tremendous speed. Over they flew, and Tom felt it shake beneath him. A brakeman had been stationed on the rear platform of the last car. He felt the bridge shake as it had never shook before, and then, as the last truck glided upon solid ground once more, he saw the whole thing go down with a crash. The abandoned cars stopped just on the brink, and it was indeed lucky that they had been cut off. With them Tom could never have made the passage, for they would have dragged him back, or, at all events, thrown him from the track. He heard the crash, as he could not well help, and he bade Dick run back and bring him the news.

"The bridge fell in just as our last car passed over. If you'd been a second later, or had any

more cars on, the whole business would have gone down."

This was the answer which was brought to Tom, and then he knew how narrow his escape had been.

"Egad, if every day is like this on this road, Fred must have a lively time of it," he said, with an uneasy laugh. "Are there any more bridges to cross before we get through?"

"No; but there are two or three tunnels; one in your own town, you know."

"Well, I reckon they're safe enough; at any rate, I'm not going to fret over it or borrow trouble."

Tom passed through two or three tunnels without accident or incident of any kind, and finally reached that in which he had formerly had such a thrilling adventure, when seized by his secret enemies. As he swept in he felt that same strange, unaccountable dread that he had before experienced on more than one occasion.

"If there is any danger I will be sure to run into it if I get off and walk ahead," he thought, and so he determined to push on and trust to luck.

There was but a single track running through the tunnel, and suddenly, when Tom was halfway in, he saw ahead of and approaching him swiftly, the headlight of another train.

"There was danger, then!" he thought, as he quickly reversed and checked his speed.

Before he could go back, however, there was great danger that the other engine would be upon him, and his heart stood still with anxiety. The newcomer was making tremendous speed, as Tom could see; and even did he succeed in overcoming his forward motion and begin the retreat in season, he would then be obliged to go much faster than he had already gone in order to escape a collision.

"That's the Owl," said the temporary fireman. "I forgot to tell you about her. We ought to have gone on a sidetrack at the first station behind us and waited."

"What speed does she make?" cried Tom, as he began to move backward, slowly at first, and then at an increased rate.

"A good fifty miles, sir."

"And this engine?" asked Tom, with bated breath, as he drove up the head of steam higher than it had been that night.

"Never knew her to make more than forty, even when she did her best."

"Clap in the coal! She must make more than that, or we are lost."

The boy put his engine to its highest speed, and presently emerged from the tunnel, the other engine being now in plain sight, and less than five hundred feet away. Tom blew a fearful blast, and then seizing a red lantern out of the locker under his seat, he quickly lighted it.

"Let her go till I come back," he cried, as, lantern in hand, he sprang out upon the footboard and ran nimbly along to the pilot. Here he stood, firmly braced, waving his lantern to and fro, and shouting at the top of his shrill voice for the other man to stop. There was little chance for the other to hear him, but he must see the lantern, and that ought to call his attention to the dangerous state of affairs. Then he saw a cloud of escaping steam, and in another

moment his engine shot away, and increased the lead by several feet. This was soon increased still further, and Tom then saw that the other man had stopped. Then he went back to the cab and the train was backed down until they reached the siding, where they got out of the way.

"Thought you was a little off when you went through so lively," muttered the man at the switch. "Guess you've got a new man on, ain't ye, to-night? Don't think much o' boy engineers, I don't."

"'Twasn't his fault, old man," said the brakeman, as they slid upon the siding. "We've lost our fireman, and I forgot to tell Tom about the Owl."

In another minute the Owl flew by, and then Tom resumed his journey, giving up his engine to Fred when he reached his own town, his friend having been waiting for him for some time.

"This has indeed been a night big with events," mused Tom, as he walked off toward his lodgings, not knowing that he had not got through with his dangers yet.

CHAPTER XIV.—A Capture and an Escape.

Tom walked cheerily toward his lodgings, his hands in his pockets, his cap drawn down over his head, his coat buttoned to his chin, and whistling merrily for company's sake. The night was cold, and he did not care to expose himself to the chill air any longer than necessary, so he walked at a good round pace, never stopping to look to the right or left, but keeping straight ahead. Suddenly, at the entrance of a narrow alley, the reputation of which was none of the best, he was assailed by two men, and although he was generally prepared for that sort of business nowadays, the assault was so sudden and unlooked for that he had no time to draw his pistol or resist in any way, before the two men had him down and had gagged and bound him.

"Some more of that fiend's work," he thought, as the men lifted him to his feet and carried him rapidly down the alley. "What new torture has he invented, I wonder?"

They entered a house, and Tom felt himself being carried upstairs, when he was presently set free in a well-lighted, well-furnished room, the men hurrying away as soon as they had removed the gag and unbound his arms.

"This is a cheerful sort of place," said Tom, looking around; "and yet I don't see anything that might be turned into an instrument of torture."

There was a table in the center of the room, and on it were a writing-desk, containing every convenience that one could think of, and a few knickknacks, among others a heavy paperweight of lead. The windows were secured by catches that Tom could not unfasten with the means at his control, although he was mechanic enough to know just how to go to work, had he the proper tools at his disposal. Inside the windows were tight shutters, there being no blinds outside; and inside there, and next to the glass, were cotton shades half drawn.

"There is some chance after all," he thought, "and I am going to see if I can't get out of here."

Then going to the table, he sat down and wrote the following on a half-sheet of note paper:

"To Whom It May Concern:

"I am detained in this house against my will, and suspect that foul play is intended, on the part of one Wolf Destey, my mortal enemy, who has several times before attempted my life. Whoever finds this will summon the police. I think the house is the third in the alley, on the left-hand side. Come at once, or it may be too late.

"THOMAS OVERTON."

Then wrapping this note about the leaden paperweight, and securing it with a bit of string, Tom carefully cut away the putty from around one of the small panes and removed the glass. He next threw the weight out, and heard it fall with a dull sound in the street, after which he replaced the glass, fastening it into place with a few thumb-tacks from the writing desk on the table, and drew the shade down, closing the shutters over it, so that the loose pane would not be noticed.

"I wonder how long it will be before that note is picked up?" the boy said to himself. "I hope those fellows here won't get hold of it."

Half an hour later he heard a confused noise in the hall below, and then came hurried steps on the stairs and along the hall.

"Where have you put him?" cried a voice that he well knew. "Here, officer, take these villains in charge."

It was Driver who had spoken, and Tom was excited beyond measure. The note had been found by the fireman, of all men, and he had come with the police to rescue his favorite.

"In here!" cried Tom, running to the door and pounding on the panels. "Here I am, pop! Let me out!"

"Is that you, Tom?" asked Driver, from the other side.

"Yes—yes. Clear the track, and let me out!"

Tom heard the sound of a struggle outside, and then a key was turned in the lock; and the door being thrown open, Driver rushed in, followed by two policemen, two others being outside, having in custody the men that had brought him hither.

"I got your note," cried Driver. "One of these policemen brought it to me at the station, where I had gone to see why you didn't come home. That was a good idea of yours, Tom."

"Take the boy away before any one else comes, Mr. Driver," said one of the officers, "and me and my mate will lug these fellows to the lock-up. You can make a charge in the morning."

Tom and the fireman wasted no time in getting out, and the latter saw Tom safe home before he left him. What would have been the surprise of Tom had he heard what the policeman and their prisoners said a few minutes after he had departed! The officers suddenly threw off their blue coats and shook hands with the prisoners, the whole crowd going into the room whence Tom had just been rescued.

"That was a good snap, boys."

"Yes; the governor always leaves that paper there, for he knows his prisoners will use it."

"What a good dodge that was, to throw the note out of the window."

"And taking us for officers so nice! It was lucky we run on the old man, though, for it'll look like a genuine escape."

"And the young fool don't know that all the boss wanted was to get a specimen of his writing."

"Neither did the old one know that the note I gave him wasn't the genuine one at all."

"Nor that the house has two entrances, and that to-morrow he won't know the place any more than if he'd never been here."

Tom, totally unaware that he was the victim of a well-laid plot, the details of which will appear later, slept soundly and did not wake until long past his usual hour. Then he and Driver went to the various station houses, but could find no one who looked at all like the prisoners of the night before, nor did any of the police captains seem to know anything about the case.

"Have you got the note I wrote?" asked Tom of his comrade.

Driver handed him a dirty, crumpled piece of paper, on which was scrawled:

"Driver—Come to the house in Frog Alley, No. 17, with the police, and let me out.

"TOM."

"That isn't my handwriting!" cried Tom, in astonishment. "I never wrote that in the world."

"I went where the policeman took me," answered Driver, in a dazed sort of way; "and as I found you there I thought no more about it."

The matter was then dismissed, not to be revived again until later on, when Tom realized exactly the nature of the plot against him. Two or three days after this, Tom was walking about in the neighborhood of the station, when he saw a gentlemanly looking person on the other side of the street, evidently taking the air, and having no particular business to worry him. There was something about the man's figure that struck him as familiar, and he crossed over quickly and suddenly accosted the stranger with:

"Hallo, Jack! Got your clothes on again, haven't you? Come up to town on speculation? Thinking of robbing a bank, eh?"

"What impudence is this?" said the stranger coolly. "I don't know you, boy. Stand aside."

"There's no use pulling your pop," cried Tom, "for I'm ready for you, and I'm going to hold on until I get help. Hallo there! Watch, police! I've got Jack Johnson!"

The street was totally deserted, however, and no one heard Tom's frantic appeal, the outlaw meanwhile struggling to release himself from the grasp which the boy had fastened upon his coat.

"Confound it, there's nobody about when I want them!" he muttered, warding off a blow which the outlaw aimed at his face. "Help, help, I say!"

Tom's cries had at last been heard, and three or four persons were hurrying toward him in opposite directions.

The outlaw had suddenly slipped out of the tight overcoat he wore, leaving the garment in Tom's hands. As he darted across the street, Tom whipped out his revolver and fired several shots. One passed through the bandit's hat, and another through the skirts of his coat.

"What's the matter?" cried two men who came hurrying up.

Tom gave a cry of surprise and jumped back.

The two newcomers were Frank Johnson and Clarence Hitt.

"Is the whole gang in town?" he cried, throwing himself into an attitude of defense. "Hallo, there, here's three of the Johnson gang!"

The men who were coming to his assistance, as soon as they heard these words, turned and fled as though they expected the house were going to fall upon them if they remained. Meanwhile Jack had dodged down a side street and into an open doorway, where he had rapidly altered his appearance in such a manner as not to be recognized as the same person. An old fellow, with a long white beard, a white hat, long faded brown coat, and leaning on a stick, passed along the street in plain sight, and Tom never recognized him. It was Jack Johnson, the outlaw.

There were other persons hurrying up, however; and the two allies, who had prevented Tom from following their chief, now suddenly decamped. Tom informed the newcomers what had happened, but they were incredulous, and even when he informed the police that Jack Johnson was in town, he was not believed. The next morning it was discovered that the Sixth National Bank of the city had been entered the previous night, and twenty-five thousand dollars in money taken away, besides various bonds and securities and many valuable documents. Later in the day Tom read the following in the daily papers:

"Among the documents stolen from the bank, which were left there for safekeeping, was the will of the late Cleofante D'Estey, of Florence, Italy, by which instrument a certain young engineer of his town is to receive, upon his twentieth birthday, a princely fortune. It is understood, however, that he has assigned all his right and title to his inheritance over to his cousin, Wolf Destey, Esquire, of St. Louis."

"What does this mean, Driver?" asked Tom, handing the paper to the fireman, who sat near him at the time. "Wolf Destey, the man who tried to kill me, will come in for a fortune; but who is the young engineer?"

"A person in whom I take a considerable interest. They call him Clear-the-Track Tom!"

"What! Am I the son of——"

"The late Cleofante D'Estey, of Florence, Italy, beyond a doubt. Once I would not have told you, but now I am compelled to do so."

"What do you mean?"

"That once I would have been glad to declare myself to be your father, as I was supposed to be."

"You were supposed to be my father?"

"Yes, and but for this villain's turning up again would, before long, have declared that I was. He knows otherwise, however, and would have exposed the kindly cheat."

"How did it happen?"

"Your father came here from Italy before your birth, and returned when you were four years old—his wife having died—leaving you with me and my wife. She died, and I began to go to the bad through drink. You were abandoned, and Heaven knows how you prospered until you met John Overton. Then I was ashamed to claim you, and

as your own father was dead, and, as far as I knew, penniless, it seemed to be of no use to make any disclosures. Your sister, who remained in Italy, married a man of whom your father disapproved, and was disinherited. I have since learned that D'Estey died very rich, leaving you all."

"And this man——"

"Married your sister, and his cousin, to obtain her supposed fortune."

"But the transfer?"

"I believe it to be a fraud of the worst kind!"

CHAPTER XV.—Affairs Begin to Look Serious.

"But I am not an Italian," said Tom, when he had recovered from his first surprise.

"No, for your mother was an American woman, and you were born here. It was through this Wolfram Destey—you see, he spells his name differently—that I first took to drink. He was a villain from the first.

"He was always plotting to secure his uncle's money, and for that reason married his cousin, your sister, who is much older than you. When he turned up again I began to investigate this affair, and learned, to my surprise, that old D'Estey had died immensely rich, and had left his money to you when you would be twenty years old. If you died before that——"

"Yes—yes—what then?"

"It was all to go to the Church."

"Then Wolf wouldn't get anything?"

"No; and hence this plan of his. Can you see now why he wanted to get your signature?"

"Well, I am not twenty yet."

"You will be twenty within the month, within the week."

"Can you swear to that?"

"Yes. I know you look younger than you are, younger than you think you are, but the records are still preserved, and I remember the day you were born as well as I remember anything."

"It was lucky for me, after all, that Jack Johnson got into that bank, for otherwise I shouldn't have known anything about this affair, and this scoundrel would have got away with the money."

"I am afraid he will do so yet."

"Do you know who has it in trust?"

"It is in a trust company in St. Louis."

"We must warn them not to give it up."

"We shall be obliged to go down there, then."

"I can send word to John Overton; give him power of attorney."

"You could do that; but you must hurry."

"I will telegraph him at once."

This was done, and late that afternoon the following reply came from Tom's adopted father:

"Dear Tom—I have been to the trust company. I cannot see what induced you to sign everything over to this stranger. Everything is perfectly straight. I would know your signature anywhere. I send you a copy to refresh your memory."

Then followed what purported to be the copy of the transfer of Tom's interest in his father's estate to Destey, which was worded thus:

"In consideration of \$1,000 (one thousand dollars), I, Thomas D'Estey, known as Thomas Overton, engineer on the Deep Valley R. R., do hereby transfer, convey and assign to my sister, Laura D'Estey, wife of Wolf D'Estey, Esq., of St. Louis, Mo., all my right, title and claim to the fortune bequeathed me by my father the late Cleofante D'Estey of Florence, Italy.

"Witness my hand and seal this 20th day of November, 1881. THOMAS OVERTON."

"James Francis, Peter Cowper, Witnesses."

"But I never made the transfer. I don't know these witnesses, and I can swear——" said Tom.

"Perhaps while you were under the influence of that drug——"

"Perhaps, though I hardly think I could have written anything."

"Your signature was all that was needed."

"But John Overton says that— Let us ask him in whose writing the thing is drawn up."

The message was sent to that effect, and shortly before Tom was to leave with his train an answer came as follows:

"The whole paper is written in your hand, signature and all. It has all your peculiarities, and I cannot question its genuineness. It is very queer that you don't remember anything about it. Come down to-morrow and set it straight. I understand that the fortune is immense. You cannot be held to a paper that you signed under compulsion, or in ignorance of its contents. Come down and explain."

That night, as Tom was speeding along, having passed through Shingle City at lightning speed, something flew in at the window of the cab and fell to the floor.

He picked up the missile, and found it to be a packet of papers fastened to a billet of wood. On top was a slip of paper, on which were penciled these words:

"This paper is of more importance to you than to Jack Johnson, and he has thrown it away; but fortunately it has come into my possession. Fear not, but keep your courage.

"YOUR FORMER FRIEND."

"Well, well, whoever this mysterious friend is, he does certainly appear at most opportune times," declared Tom, and then, opening the large paper: "What do you suppose this is?"

"The will?"

"Yes; and, as the paper says, everything is left to me without reserve. There is no doubt about it, either, for it speaks of me as being known by the name of Thomas Overton."

"H'm! I didn't know that much. I had discovered that there was a will in your favor, but I didn't know that it was as specific as that. When is it dated, and where?"

"At St. Louis, in 1879, and it is signed by three or four witnesses."

"In 1879? Why, I did not know—why, your father was reported dead long before that. How did the will come to be deposited in the Sixth National Bank of our city, instead of in St. Louis?"

"I don't know; but there it is, at any rate, and I am going to hang onto it, no matter what happens."

Nothing did happen that night, and the next day Driver and Tom took a run down to St. Louis to examine the papers in the strange case, which now so fully occupied their minds. Tom found Overton first of all, and then all three went to the Trust Company, and asked to see the transfer. A legal gentleman, who said he represented Destey, was there, and the paper was shown to Tom in his presence. The boy could not repress a cry of astonishment when he looked at it. He never saw a more perfect copy of his handwriting, and it seemed to him as if he must have written it.

"Will you swear that you didn't write that?" asked the lawyer, in a triumphant tone. "I believe there has been a question raised concerning the genuineness of the document."

"This whole thing is a fraud and a forgery from top to bottom," said Tom impetuously, and before any one could stop him, "a contemptible forgery. If my name is D'Estey, why did I put Overton down? I haven't seen Wolf Destey since before the twentieth, and how could I sign this thing then? If I did do it, it was while under the influence of a drug. Go on with this thing if you like, but I'll put in a counter claim, and you can't touch a penny of this money till it's settled. The will isn't admitted to probate yet, and I know it."

"Good day, my sneaking, pettifogging friend; and remember, if you try any nonsense with me, either you or Destey, I'll burst your boilers and tumble you down the embankment so quick that you won't know what struck you!"

After this last defiance Tom threw on his hat and stalked out of the room. Overton following, very red in the face, and shaking his fist at the legal gentleman, Driver with his thumb to his nose and his fingers twirling in the most exasperating manner.

"Egad, Tom, you gave that fellow a settler!" cried Overton, when they got outside. "I was going to stop you at first, but you gave him a regular knock-down, and I saw there was no use for me to say anything. Egad, you can fight as well with your tongue as you used to with your fists."

While Tom and Driver were waiting in the depot for the train to take them home, a young lady approached Tom, and suddenly seizing his hand, cried heartily:

"Why, you dear old Tom Overton, how glad I am to see you! Why haven't you called on me? I've been home over a week."

It was Tom's volatile young lady friend, Mattie Marsh, who thus spoke to him, and Tom was as delighted to see her as she appeared at seeing him.

"I started to do so once, but met with an adventure. Do you know Frank Flash?"

"He's an impudent, conceited young monkey, and father forbade him coming to our house. He got into some trouble with his employers, and might have been discharged, and put in jail besides, for I believe he took quite a lot of money that didn't belong to him."

The train was now ready to start, and Tom and the young lady took seats, Driver sitting elsewhere, so as not to disturb the young lovers, which he considered them to be, or quite likely

to become so shortly, if they were not at that precise moment. At the same time Tom's enemy was in consultation with the lawyer.

CHAPTER XVI.—Tom Loses Enemy and Friend.

As the train flew along, bearing Tom and Mattie homeward, they spent the time very pleasantly chatting upon all sorts of subjects. Suddenly there came a violent shock, and Mattie was thrown forward against the back of the seat in front. Tom knew at once that there had been an accident, and realized his danger in an instant. Seizing Mattie in his arms, he leaped to his feet and sped swiftly along the aisle toward the door. Several passengers had already got upon their feet, and many women were screaming and adding to the terrible confusion. Just as the car tilted over to one side, Tom reached the door and seized the safety rail at the side. Claspings one arm tightly about the young girl, he leaped to the ground and hurried away. He had hardly done so when the car went over upon its side and down an embankment with a crash. One other car was dragged over with it, but, fortunately, the others were only dragged from the track. There had been a misplaced switch, and the train had run into a freight engine standing on a siding.

"You have saved my life, Tom," said Mattie; "how can I repay you?"

"By giving me the power to save you whenever occasion offers—to stand by you through life."

"Oh, Tom!" was all she could say.

"Is that too much?"

"No, but——"

"You do not love me?"

"Who said I didn't?" and throwing her arms about the boy's neck, she kissed him again and again, until he began to blush as deeply as she herself.

"There, there! I know what you mean!" cried Tom at length; "and we'll be married just as soon as you can get ready, after I come into my property—for I will, never fear."

Leaving Mattie in a safe place, Tom then bestirred himself about giving assistance to the wounded, and doing all in his power to bring order out of the confusion which reigned. A wrecking train was sent for, and in the course of a couple of hours the cars were got upon the track again, the broken rails mended, and the train proceeded. Tom arrived home in time to take his train out, and he and Driver talked over the events of the day as they bounded along. Tom was left alone in the station at the terminus for some minutes, Driver being in the diningroom getting his supper, when a handsome, striking-looking man approached Tom and said abruptly:

"You are Thomas Overton, so called?"

"I am called Tom Overton; what of it?"

"You do not know me?"

"No."

"I have done you a service on several occasions."

"You are the man that sent me those mysterious warnings?"

"Yes."

"Who are you?"

"In time you will know. Let me give you one more word of encouragement. Do not fear this man Wolf Destey, but keep your appointment on the last of the month. He will not wrest your inheritance from you, never fear."

"But——" began Tom.

"Do you know Frank Flash?"

"Yes."

"Avoid him; he is Destey's tool, and has tried to ruin you more than once."

"I'll ruin his face if I catch him, the young puppy, as I ruined his clothes the last time I met him! He is on the road to the State prison, and will get there, too, if he doesn't look out."

"Good night," said the stranger quickly, as he glanced about him hurriedly, and in another moment he was gone. When the time came for Tom to return, he jumped aboard his engine, and catching the conductor's signal, threw open the throttle and went away with a rush and a whirl. As he approached the bridge where he had once before had so narrow an escape from Johnson and his gang, Tom saw a red light displayed.

"Wonder what I had better do, pop?" he said.

"You'd better stop, Tom."

Tom thereupon shut off steam and came to a halt within a dozen paces of the bridge.

"What's the matter?" he asked, seeing a man approaching.

"Is that you, Tom?" he heard a voice say.

It was Frank Flash, and all Tom's anger was aroused in an instant.

"Yes, it is I, as you will find out!" he cried, as he leaped to the ground.

Springing forward, he seized the young scamp by the collar and was about to give him a thrashing when the man with the red lantern came rushing up with something that glistened in his hand.

"Now, Tom Destey, we will see who will win!" he cried.

It was the villain, Tom's relative, and in his hand was a gleaming revolver. Tom never went without his own weapon now, and in an instant it was in his hand. Crack! Crack! Both combatants fired one shot apiece, but neither was hurt. Tom had, of course, released Flash at the time his enemy appeared, and the latter now bolted. As the two shots were fired, a sudden, confused sound was heard from behind the little house occupied by the bridgekeeper. Then three or four dusky forms leaped out, and a voice, which Tom knew too well, cried out:

"The signal, boys! Now for the train!"

It was Jack Johnson, the outlaw. Two or three men ran up, and in the obscurity fired, not at Tom, but at his opponent. Tom had dropped to the ground, and was now making his way toward the engine. At that moment he heard Destey's shriek of agony, and saw him fall to the ground.

"Fool!" he hissed; "you have killed me instead of him."

At the next moment Driver and half a dozen brakemen appeared and began firing rapidly at the outlaws.

"Back, back!" cried the outlaw; "the game is up."

The villains hurried away after firing a volley, which was returned with interest. Poor Driver

was hit, however, being the only man almost that had received any hurt. Destey had not stirred since he had fallen, and Tom now got a lantern and went up to examine him more closely. Tom knelt down and laid one hand on the man's heart. There was no motion there, and his tightly clenched hands were like lumps of ice.

"He will not do any one else any more harm," murmured Tom.

That was true enough, for the man was stone dead, shot through the brain by the outlaws in mistake for Tom.

Tom learned not long afterward that his suspicions were correct, and that Destey had agreed to deliver the train up to the outlaws, provided he might have the pleasure of killing Tom himself. Flash had been sent ahead as a decoy, for Destey knew that Tom would pursue him at sight. Tom having been lured away from the train, two shots was the signal that was to bring the outlaws from their hiding place. The shots had been given, indeed, but not as was intended. The outlaws, hurrying up, had taken the treacherous Destey for one of the trainmen and had fired. The ruffian had met his death by the hands of the very men to whom he would have betrayed the train. His schemes were all brought to a sudden end, and now he lay cold and dead, with no one to mourn him.

At the next stopping place one of the brakemen came to Tom and told him that old Driver wished to see him most anxiously, for he had but a little while to live. Tom hastened to the side of his old friend, and said cheerily:

"Brace up, pop, and get on more steam; you're good for a long while yet."

"No, Tom, no; it's all up with me. I did you a service, though, Tom, for the ball that hit me was meant for you."

"How can I thank you, my old friend!" cried Tom, grasping his hand.

"I did you a bad turn once, getting drunk and leaving you to shift for yourself, but you pulled through well, and now you're in the best of ways to succeed. Good-by, Tom."

"Good-by, then, pop, and God bless you."

Tom felt the grasp on his hand tighten for a moment, and the man looked into his face with a look of tenderness. Then his fingers relaxed their hold, his eyes closed, his head fell back upon Tom's breast, he gave one short gasp, and then lay low and still at the boy's feet. The old man was dead, and Tom felt that he had lost a friend indeed.

CHAPTER XVII.—The Clouds Clear Away.

The rest of Tom's trip that night was sad indeed, for his old friend lay dead in the baggage car, and Tom was taking his remains home. The old fellow had no friends that Tom knew of, and certainly none appeared, so that our hero called upon the employees of the road to do something toward giving their friend a decent burial. Tom himself contributed largely toward it, and the old man had a good funeral, everybody attending that could get away, for all who had known him had liked him, on account of his regard for Tom. The old man was laid away to rest, therefore, followed by the regrets of a great number of people, and a handsome monument was afterward

erected over his grave, enumerating his many good qualities, and closing with this inscription:

"Greater love hath no man than this, that he giveth his life to save his friend."

After this sad business was all over there were other matters to attend to. The question of the inheritance had to be settled. Tom went down to St. Louis on the day appointed, and met a number of legal gentlemen. The proofs of his own birth, given by Driver, were presented in due form, and his right to the property in question again urged. All admitted that he was Thomas, son of Cleofante D'Estey, late of Florence, Italy. It was another question that had to be decided. Had he made over all his right and title to the estate to Wolf? Tom swore that the paper was a forgery, and told how Wolf had tried to obtain his signature. He related also how the man had, on many occasions, tried to kill him, and told all that Driver had related to him concerning the man.

"Besides all this," he concluded, "the man is dead, and has left no heirs."

"You are mistaken," answered the lawyer who represented the dead man. "There is an heir."

"Who is it?"

"A young man by the name of Frank Flash, though that is not his true name."

"Frank Flash! And does that young puppy think he is going to cheat me out of my own?" cried Tom, in a rage.

"There will be no cheating, my young friend," said the lawyer suavely. "Law is law."

"But law is not always justice. Who is this Frank Flash? An acknowledged son of this dead scoundrel, no doubt."

"He is the true son of the late Wolfram Destey, and also his legatee," answered the other quietly, but with a look of triumph.

"His legatee?"

"Yes; and I have here the will of my late client which can be proved very easily. I am afraid, my young friend, that your dream of gold will prove but an idle vision."

"That is enough," said a gentleman who had been representing Tom, though the latter did not know him. "That speech shows us the animus of the other side. I denounce their scheme as the most villainous conspiracy that was ever attempted! Don't interrupt me!" he cried, springing to his feet, "for I wish to put a few questions to the referee."

"Go on, sir, but pray don't abuse the other side too much; it is not good policy."

"First, if this will, giving Thomas D'Estey all his father's estate, is valid, the man must be dead, must he not?"

"Assuredly so."

"Then it is not valid; at least not yet ready to take effect. I have allowed my opponent to go on in order that I might show the depth of his villainy. Although Wolf Destey is dead, this viper retains all his late employer's malignancy. He is now working ostensibly in the interests of young Flash, but really in his own. Frank Flash has wisely kept himself aloof, knowing that there is a reward for his apprehension, as there may be some day for the party who represents him."

"Come to the point, sir!" cried the referee.

"Well, then, my point is this: that although

this is the will of Cleofante D'Estey, the man himself is still alive."

There was the greatest confusion at this startling announcement.

"Yes, alive; and here he is."

The door opened and a tall, handsome man entered and sat down. Tom gave a start. The man was the same he had spoken to a few nights before. The mysterious friend about whom he had puzzled his head so much.

"Gentlemen," said the stranger, when he had been sworn, "I am Cleofante D'Estey, and that will was written by me and deposited here by a friend, I being at that time obliged to go abroad. I did not know if I would ever return, but I have done so lately, and hearing that I was regarded as dead, sought out and watched over my son Thomas, known as Tom Overton. I protected him upon several occasions, but did not show myself, having other things in view, one being the hunting down of the villain who sought to rob him.

"The man is dead, but his evil influence still lives. The transfer to him I believe to be a forgery. If my son says so, I know it is. Lest this lying paper should be proved good in spite of us, I have a means to defeat the schemes of this villain carried on by his unprincipled tool, the lawyer opposite. Whatever is left to my son Thomas by this will is to belong to Wolf Destey, his heirs and assigns, is it? Then if there is no will, there is nothing to transfer!"

Then suddenly seizing the document from the table, he tore it into a hundred pieces and threw them upon the fire.

"This is contempt!" cried the baffled man of the law for the other side.

"You don't suppose I have any respect for you, do you?" cried the man, with withering scorn. "Of course it is contempt."

"You are not Cleofante D'Estey—you are an impostor."

"Liar! However, this is no need to answer such as you. Your betters can have all the proof they want that I am what I represent myself to be."

The matter was adjourned, and the man proved himself to be the missing D'Estey beyond a doubt. Frank Flash disappeared, and the jackal of a lawyer, who had thought to enrich himself out of this case, betook himself to a distant State, where his reputation would not soon overtake him.

Tom's father made a new will after this, leaving everything unconditionally to his son. Tom had resumed his own name, though every one continued to call him Clear-the-Track Tom, as of old. A few months after these events Tom, like many others, was surprised to hear of the sudden death of Jack Johnson. Tom continued to run his engine until he was twenty-one, and then, his father having died in the meantime, he gave up the business entirely. Mattie Marsh became his wife, and they then sailed for Europe to enjoy themselves and see the world. And there we will leave them.

Next week's issue will contain "GALLANT JACK BARRY, THE YOUNG FATHER OF THE AMERICAN NAVY."

CURRENT NEWS

CRIPPLE ON JOURNEY

From Long Beach to San Francisco in a wheel chair is the unique stunt being undertaken by B. E. Davids of No. 1608 Woodside Avenue, Los Angeles, who reached Santa Barbara the other day in his odd conveyance. Davids is sixty years old and a cripple. He covered the entire distance between this city and Long Beach in his wheel chair propelled only by his hand power. Davids left Los Angeles Sunday, Aug. 15, and averages about seventeen miles a day. He figures a month to make the trip. He is making the trip, he says, to demonstrate the kind of roads to be found in California, because nowhere else could a trip like this for nearly 500 miles be made, according to Davids.

SEEING LIGHTNING STRIKE

One July a scientist had the unusual fortune to see a bolt of lightning strike an isolated cottonwood tree about a quarter of a mile away. The flash appeared as a superb column or shaft of light about four hundred or five hundred feet high and eight to twelve inches in diameter, perfectly straight, vertical and steady. The shaft was white, with its base tinged with red. This column seemed to stand between two diverging trunks of the tree, and lasted about two seconds.

Afterward the scientist found that one of the two trunks of the double tree had its bark stripped off in the shape of a ribbon six inches wide and two yards long. The other trunk showed two furrows beginning ten feet above the ground. They looked as if they had been ploughed by a piece of steel. There was no sign of fire.

DOES THE AIR SURROUNDING THE EARTH MOVE WITH IT?

This is one of the old puzzling questions which many a high school student has had to struggle with to the great amusement of the teacher who asks for the information and such other scholars who have already had the experience of trying to solve it.

To get at the right answer you have merely to ask one other question. If the air does not revolve with the earth, why can't I go up in a balloon at New York and stay up long enough for the earth to revolve on its axis beneath me, and come down again when the city of San Francisco appears under the balloon, which should be in about four hours? If that were possible, travel would be both rapid and comfortable, for then we could sit quietly in a balloon while the earth, traveling beneath us, would get all the bumps.

No, the atmosphere surrounding the earth moves right along with the earth on its axis. If it were not so, the earth would probably burn up—at least no living thing could remain on it—since the friction of the surface of the earth would develop such a heat that nothing could live on it.—The Book of Wonders.

NEVER WENT TO SCHOOL A DAY

Horatio Sherman, eighty-six years of age, who lives in Red Hook, N. Y., has never attended school one day in his entire life, and this in cultured County of Dutchess, within twenty-one miles of Poughkeepsie, known as the "City of Schools."

A visitor, seeking information from Sherman, who is one of the oldest inhabitants of the county, queried as to how he had escaped being sent to school.

"Well," said the aged man, "when I was young poor people couldn't go to school for nothing like they can do now, and my people were poor."

The old man left home when he was ten years old and did farm work, earning his own living. He has worked all his life, and since his wife died, ten years ago, he has done all the housework, including washing, ironing and cooking.

Sherman lets life drift by while he dreams. But there is one subject upon which he is enthusiastic. That is the Civil War.

"I was out only one year and in only one battle," he admits, "but I'll tell you what, I was in Gen. Sherman's band of men that marched to the sea. We went three days and three nights without eating. We drew seven days' rations and they had to last sixty-seven days, and we hoofed every step from Raleigh to Washington. People nowadays don't know nothing about war."

NEW PARACHUTE RECORD MADE BY ARMY MAN

The Army Air Service reports that Lieutenant A. G. Hamilton recently fell 20,900 feet in twelve minutes, establishing a new altitude record for "chutes." He missed death only by clever manoeuvring.

Lieutenant Hamilton jumped from a La Pere plane piloted by Lieutenant P. H. Downs at Carlstrom Field, Arcadia, Fla. A heavy layer of cloud was encountered at 4,000 feet, a lighter cloud formation at 10,000 feet and mist at 15,000 feet. The previous "high jump" record was 19,800 feet, made by Lieutenant King in Texas.

As soon as he discovered something wrong with his motor Lieutenant Downes manoeuvred for the best possible position for Lieutenant Hamilton to jump off. As Hamilton hopped into space he caught a glimpse of the earth, mistaking it for Door Field. Hamilton allowed two seconds for clearance, then pulled the wire which was supposed to release a pilot chute. The chute springs open automatically and, catching the rush of air, draws the main chute from the back of the aviator. Hamilton had fallen an estimated distance of 2,000 feet before the big parachute opened. Hamilton then discovered that the springs which close the air vent at the top were broken.

When he approached the earth he found himself over a wooded area. Climbing the rigging, he pulled an edge of the parachute downward and was saved by a rope catching on the branches of a tree.

CHARLIE CHAPMAN'S COURAGE

—OR—

THE BOY WHO TOOK CARE OF HIS MOTHER

By WILLIAM WADE

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER VIII.

Charlie Settles the Score for Good.

He was too much of a trickster to trust it outside his own hold, until he had his itching fingers on the other—the money.

"Very good!" commented the young fellow, as he smiled at the paper. "I see that you are used to putting things in writing which will not incriminate you."

"Take it from me," said the politician; "I know how to do a good many things."

"So I imagine!" came a stern voice from the rear.

The men whirled about, and beheld Judge Cromley's portly form entering the room.

"Who are you?" cried the three then in astonishment and panic.

"I am Judge Cromley, and I represent this young man. Let's see that paper?"

He snatched the sheet from the hand of the astonished Marble.

"Gimme that back!" shouted the politician in a fright. He leaped forward, but the jaunty old judge had jerked the paper behind his back.

With his left hand he warded off the rush of the politician which sent that whisky-weakened individual toppling over a chair. The judge showed a strength which surprised even Charlie.

"Come in, men!" cried the judge.

Through three entrances came in the judge's reserve forces.

The town marshal came through one door, the sheriff through another, and a constable through the window from the outside.

"You see, I thought I might have trouble nabbing these birds of prey. Well, they're safe now," said the judge, as each man was grabbed by an officer of the law.

The three men were as wild eyed as animals at bay.

They realized that they were caught red handed in their work.

"Well, what do you mean by this affront?" cried Marble. "Do you know who I am?"

"Sure as shooting!" replied Judge Cromley. "You are known as one of the worst tricksters in the State Legislature. You have never been captured with the goods before, but I have enough to cause your impeachment and punishment."

Marble's face went chalky white, as he heard these words.

"Why—how dare you—you——"

The judge motioned to the men, who slipped handcuffs on the wrists of the prisoners.

It was so seldom that handcuffs were necessary in Fernbank's peaceful precincts that this was a gala day for the three representatives of law's majesty.

"Well, now," said the judge, as peaceful as if he were discussing the weather. "We may as well show you the warrants that I have secured for your arrest. You are all going to be brought up for conspiracy, obtaining money under false pretense, and for forgery."

This was still more bitter to the men, but they yet hoped to brazen it out.

"There is no false pretense," cried Marble. "I have not had a cent yet from this fellow. This is the receipt I signed, and I was not paid yet. I guess this is legitimate enough—to represent him legally."

"Yes," said the judge, "but I have a witness who heard your conversation with him down the road and saw you accept a ten-dollar bill."

"Well, I have a note for a thousand dollars," declared the wily Benton. "And I want the money on that or I will make Rome howl."

"Ha, ha!" laughed the judge. "That note is a forgery. You are a pair of rascals, you and this fellow, Jake Woods. How about that farm which you obtained false court records against—the one that belonged to poor Hezekiah Denny, in the next county?"

"Great Scott!" muttered Woods. "Who brought him here?"

For just at this instant the farmer, with indignant face and raging temper, strode into the room.

"I brung myself here, ye rascals, and I've got ye with enough evidence to land ye all behind the bars. Now fer my turn at revenge."

It was all Charlie and the judge could do to keep the excited fellow from attacking Benton.

But the punishment was coming now, without physical assistance.

That day the trio were jailed, and in a very short time, the judge forced the case through the courts. Before another week had elapsed, the three were under indictment for severe crimes, and their sphere of activity had been limited. In another month they were all sent to the penitentiary for their crimes.

The forgery was proved, and other such tricks were unearthed, so that Charlie's efforts did a great deal good to a wider area of the State than he had supposed.

The men proved to be members of a crowd of sharpers who had been working the entire State.

Hezekiah Denny's farm, it was shown, had never been legitimately changed in regard to ownership. The mortgage still existed, but Judge Cromley bought the mortgage, and extended it for the honest fellow.

"You can go back on it," said the Judge to Denny, a couple of weeks later.

"No, sir, I'll just let it out to one of the neighbors who is willing to pay me a cash rental," said Hez. "An' I'm goin' ter stay here an' work for Mister Charlie. He has been my good mascot, an' I think I'll be the winner by so doin'."

Charlie had carried out his plans with the corner crib, and by hard work, he and Hez had improved the weeks, and made a very comfortable house out of it.

(To be continued.)

THE NEWS IN SHORT ARTICLES.

FOUND AGED TERRAPIN

A terrapin, which according to the date cut on the bottom of the shell, is more than 61 years old, was found a few days ago by James L. Zellas at Stewartstown, Pa. The date is 1859, and the initials L. S. The latter correspond to those of his grandfather, Levi Sellers, who often cut dates and his initials on terrapins.

AVIATOR DISCOVERS RUINED CITY

Archæological investigation will be greatly facilitated by the use of the airplane. For instance, in his recent flight along the length of the African continent Dr. Chalmers Mitchell, the English scientist, observed a ruined city on the banks of the Tigris which was wholly unknown and which was to be clearly seen from the height, whereas it could have been readily overlooked by any one passing on the surface in the vicinity.

FOUGHT A BUCK DEER

James Snook of San Francisco, had an exciting experience with a buck deer at Occidental, in Marin County, Cal. Snook was out hunting alone, and sighting the animal fired two shots. The deer fell, and thinking that it was dead Snook ran up to his prize. To his surprise the apparently dead animal jumped up and rushed at him viciously. Before he could protect himself, Snook was knocked down and trampled into insensibility. He finally recovered, and upon staggering to his feet discovered the deer lying dead not more than two hundred yards away. Snook sustained a fracture of two ribs by being struck by the deer's horns when he was first thrown to the ground. In addition he was considerably bruised by the animal's hoofs.

SAWDUST CONVERTED INTO FOOD

When the dairy farmer of the future needs feed for his cows he may get a fresh supply by going out in his wood lot and reducing a few stumps to sawdust.

By chemical treatment sawdust may be converted into a nourishing cattle food. This fact was brought out at the sectional meeting of Industrial and Engineering Chemists, American Chemical Society, at the University of Chicago.

The process of preparing such animal food was described by E. C. Sherrard and G. W. Blanco. White sawdust, finely ground, is treated with diluted sulphuric acid under steam pressure. This breaks up the fiber and extracts the sugar. The acid is neutralized by adding lime. The liquid thus obtained, when boiled down, is rich in sugar, and when mixed with the fiber produces a moist feed containing about 15 per cent. of water, in which form it is fed to dairy cows.

At the Forest Products Laboratory, United States Department of Agriculture, Madison, Wis., experiments are said to have proved that cows thrived on this sawdust ration, and not only gave more milk but increased in weight.

SEASHORE?

The sand on the seashore is nothing more or less than groundup sandstone. In dealing with the inanimate things in the world we find that a very important element of all of them has been given the name silicon. When the crust of the earth, which is the part we call the land and rocks, and includes the part under the sea, was a molten mass, this silicon was burned, combining with the oxygen which surrounded everything and produced what is known as silica. Silica is the name given to the thing which is left after you burn silicon. A very large part of this silica was deposited in parts of the earth, and when the crust of the earth cooled off it was sand. By pressure and contact with other substances it became stuck together, just as you can take wet sand at the seashore today and make bricks and houses and tunnels, excepting that in the case we speak of it was something besides water that pressed and stuck the little particles of sand together. They stuck together more permanently. Then, when the oceans were formed much of the stones were found to be at the bottom of the shores of the oceans. The action of the water continually washing against the sandstone gradually broke the sandstone up into the tiny particles of sand again, and this is what makes the sand on the seashore.—Book of Wonders.

FOOTBALL IN TURKEY

It has always been a difficult matter to be a sportsman in Turkey. One Turk, Rechad Bey, tried it with a result weird enough to serve as a basis for a detective story.

It appears that the young Turk had organized a football team among his friends, together with some Greeks and Armenians, and began practising. Shortly thereafter, in the middle of the night, police came to his house and carried him off to Scutari. There he was submitted to a long examination as to the club and the game of football.

The authorities were convinced that they had found a great plot, and that the club must be a secret society. A special messenger was sent for the ball, and that was duly examined and found to be an infernal machine. The rules of the game were considered to be another piece of damning evidence, and still worse were the sweaters and colors of the club.

After long deliberation the culprit was sent to the higher police authorities in Stamboul, who went through a second long examination and came to the conclusion that the empire had been saved from disintegration by the early discovery of a great plot. They despatched the whole matter to be inquired into at the Sultan's palace at Yildiz, and a special commission took the matter in hand.

After much careful thought and examination of the evidence of the crime it was decided that there might be nothing in it, but that it must not be committed again.

BETRAYED BY A LETTER

By ALEXANDER ARMSTRONG.

It was a beautiful moonlit night, a soft fragrant breeze stirring the trees and rustling the madoorkati jungle, along the edge of which Barry Knox was riding on a magnificent horse.

The young man stroked his dark mustache thoughtfully as he pressed on, and a frown settled upon his brow, as he muttered:

"Viscount Canning must be blind if he believes this revolt was wholly started by Tantia Topee, for the Maharajah Scindia, of Gwailor, is sure he saw a white man among the Sepoys in the city of Lucknow. Hence, if India is swept from the hands of the British and returns to the power of the Great Mogul, it will be owing to the cunning of a renegade white man. But then I don't really care, for Britain has nothing to do with me! All I desire is to get the true facts of the war for the New York Daily Planet, for which I was sent here, as correspondent.

And having come to this conclusion, the young war correspondent touched his horse's flanks with his spurs and guided the noble beast upon its course, wondering how soon he would reach Lucknow, to where he was going from Benares. He had been journeying from Calcutta.

Within half an hour the road led him to the shore of the Goomtee River, where the jungle was thickest, and he had scarcely turned a sharp bend in the road when he came upon a chaityas (temple) lying in a mass of ruins, only a stupa, or single pillar, uprising like a gaunt sentinel in the yellow moonlight.

No sooner had this object come in sight when Barry was startled by hearing a strange cry, and his horse reared upon its haunches, and stood staring with startled eyes and distended nostrils at the shadowy ruin.

The next instant a huge figure sprang into view upon a fallen pillar, and as the moonlight fell upon it a cry of fear escaped Barry's lips, and he felt for the rifle slung across his back.

It was a huge tiger.

Barry raised his weapon to fire, but just as he was about to pull the trigger the tiger turned its head to one side, glared behind it, and, wheeling around, it disappeared like a flash, uttering a blood-curdling roar.

Wondering what could have distracted the attention of the beast from him, Barry was just about to urge his horse ahead, out of such a dangerous locality, when he heard a terrible cry in a human voice, coming from the interior of the ruin. It made him start, and springing from his saddle, he tethered his horse to a tree and hastily ran over to the stupa. As he glanced over the fallen pillar, a strange but dreadful sight met his view in the clearing beyond.

Lying upon the ground was a young Hindoo, endeavoring to thrust his spear into the body of the tiger, which stood with one of its huge paws pressed upon his body.

The young journalist raised his rifle, and taking deliberate aim at the tiger, he fired. There came a horrible scream of agony from the beast, its huge body bounded into the air, and when

it struck the earth again it was dead. The bullet had pierced its brain.

The next instant the Hindoo sprang to his feet.

"Oh, good sahib! me buckra glad!" exclaimed the frightened Hindoo.

"You ought to be, as I saved your mutton just now. But, I say, get up."

The native arose and regarded Barry intently a moment.

"Whar yo' go?" he asked at length.

"To Lucknow, for news of the revolt you fellows are making."

"No, no! Yo' not go dere! It is de burra choop now. Soon Nana Sahib kill de Feringhees. Yo' go back. De Shah in Shah sen' chup-pattees——"

"Ah, so Lucknow is besieged, eh? But that's all right, my boy. I know all about the encyclical letter of pastry, found in the tent of the Shahzadfa at Mohumra, and the placards of Delhi. But who are you?"

"Holkar, of Indore."

"Ah, then you prepared these leaves to blind the beast so you could dispatch it?"

"I did. And now that it is no more, and I owe you my life, I am grateful and would warn you for good to retrace your steps to the south of the Ganges."

"No," replied Barry decisively. "I have come thus far and will continue on."

The black finally gave up in despair, and then Barry left him beside the carcass of the tiger, went back to his horse, vaulted into the saddle after loosening the bridle, and set off on his way again to the northwest.

On rode on for several hours, and finally reached a clearing where he resolved to halt for the night, as he was weary of traveling.

Making his horse fast, he threw his blanket on the ground, ignited a cigar and after smoking it up he laid down and fell asleep.

How long he remained wrapped in slumber he did not know, but he was awakened by hearing a chorus of most frightful cries, and, starting up, he was horrified to find himself bound hand and foot, in the midst of a herde of armed Hindoos.

They lifted him bodily, and, despite his protestations in their own language, which Barry spoke fluently, they carried him away in their midst.

Within an hour they arrived at an encampment and carried him to a tent, wherein sat a white man, attired like Barry, who was busy writing at a table. He had a dark face, a black beard and was smoking a cigar.

Glancing up as the blacks carried Knox inside, he looked somewhat surprised.

Turning to the blacks, he asked them about Barry in their own language. They told where they had captured him.

"An Englishman, no doubt," said the man, when they concluded.

"No; I am the correspondent of the New York Daily Planet," replied Barry, "sent here by my paper for news of the insurrection. And you——"

"I am all-powerful in this camp."

"Why, sir, can it be possible you are in league with the rebels?"

"I might as well admit it. I am the chief ally of Tantia Topee."

"I can't say I fancy your principle," said Barry.

The man shrugged his shoulders and uttered a coarse laugh.

"Every one to his taste," he replied, darting a sinister look at the journalist.

"Of course. Anyhow, do me the favor to release me of these bonds. What's the use of keeping me tied up? I couldn't run away if I wanted to."

He spoke to one of the blacks, who released Barry, and then, at his order, they all filed out of the tent, leaving them alone together.

Barry began to think that the profligate was not so bad after all.

The letter he was writing seemed to be one of the utmost importance, for long after Barry had retired he sat writing on it. Indeed, the man did not retire to rest that night, and when morning dawned, and the light stole through the canvas of the tent, he arose from his chair, folded his letter, and sealing it with a string, he went to the door, and called out in his heavy bass voice:

"Nana Sahib! Nana Sahib!"

"Good heavens!" muttered Barry upon hearing that dreaded name of the Ranees the man was calling. "Can that monster be in camp here?"

Going to the door of the tent, with a cigar in his mouth, to get a glimpse of the dreadful chief, he saw the dark-bearded man standing outside.

A lithe-looking young Sepoy, wearing a turban and loin-girt and carrying an assegai, hurried up to the tent in answer to the man's call.

"Nana Sahib, you must deliver this before sundown."

Making a low obeisance, the black walked away. Then the man turned around and confronted Barry.

"You see," said he, "that my word is law here."

"Yes. And the missive you sent?"

"I will tell you. Sir Colin Campbell is about to attack Lucknow, and Tantia Topee holds the city. I left there to spy upon the enemy's forces, and knowing how they are situated, I have planned to lure them within the city, and then come on behind them with the force which is here at my command, and thus hem him in and annihilate him."

"Where did you find the blacks of this encampment?"

"I gathered them from the surrounding towns under Nana Sahib."

There were over a thousand armed natives in the camp, and, strange to say, none of them said anything about the war they were engaged in, but lay around smoking and amusing themselves with simple games until the afternoon began wearing away. Barry watched them for some time, and then entered his tent and lay down in a woven India grass hammock, where he indolently

smoked a cigar and arranged his notebook.

While so engaged he suddenly became conscious of the presence of somebody in the tent besides himself and looked up with a start.

Before him stood Nana Sahib.

"I have come, oh, sahib, to talk with you."

"I suppose you have delivered his letter?"

"No. I remained hidden in the jungle until Sahib Danbury passed——"

"Danbury!" exclaimed Barry in astonishment.

"Can it be possible that he is the rascal who was drummed out of the 6th Dragoon Guards, and the first battalion of His Majesty's 60th Rifles, stationed at Meerut, last February, for having been proven a common thief?"

"He is none else, and is now the chief ally of the house of Timur—a renegade—a poltroon and a coward at heart!"

Barry tore open the seal and withdrew the missive.

Holding it up to the light, he read the following lines:

"To His Majesty, the King of Delhi:-

"Knowing, sire, that you understand English perfectly, I inscribe this in the Feringee language, to guard against any of the unfaithful reading it. After leaving Lucknow, I entered the ranks of the infidel dog who leads the English, and learned that they purpose to take the garrison by assault, on the last day of the week, after nightfall. Since the 3d of March has the city been under siege; on the 17th they mean to conclude the engagement. My advice to you is to leave Tantia Topee to care for Lucknow, while you escape to Delhi, as Hodson, of Hodson Horse Guards, has sworn to exterminate you and your sons. The mutineers mean to march from Meerut to the capital, and it is the intention of Willoughby to explode the powder magazine, and devastate the city. I am, your servant,

"DANBURY."

He had no sooner finished when a man sprang into the tent.

It was Charles Danbury, the traitor.

"By the powers of darkness, this man has played me false!" he cried.

Danbury flashed out his gleaming sword, but before he could strike, Nana drew back his spear and taking rapid aim he let it fly like a streak of lightning.

It pierced Danbury's bosom, and he fell to the ground at Barry's feet.

"You have ruined us!" Barry gasped, as he recoiled a step.

"Nay—I have only rid this fair earth of a venomous reptile!"

"But these natives——"

"Will not harm us."

"Why not?"

"Because they are all my faithful subjects."

"Your subjects! Then in heaven's name who are you?"

"I am Holkar, the Maharajah of Indore!"

The next day they went to Lucknow, and joining Sir Colin Campbell's forces, the city was taken. Tantia Topee was caught, tried by court-martial and hanged.

PLUCK AND LUCK

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

United States Consul Burdett of Ensenada, Lower California, reports great development in the shark fishing industry. The fins are sold to Chinese for making soup, the livers furnish a valuable oil and the flesh is dried and used as fertilizer or chicken feed.

The leaves and stems of the "burning tree" of India are covered with stinging hairs, after the manner of the common nettle, but are of a far more virulent nature. When touched the sensation felt is as of being burnt with red hot iron, the pain extending over other parts of the body and lasting several days.

The misery of the formerly well-to-do people of Budapest, and a sidelight on the exchange situation, are afforded by a bill in the National Assembly increasing certain Judges' salaries from 5,000 to 6,000 crowns. This represents, in American money, a raise of about 50 cents a month.

Dog fanciers of San Francisco learned of the death at Alexandria, La., of Bilmer Bingo, champion Airedale, who won many blue ribbons at local bench shows. Bilmer Bingo, owned by Dr. W. C. Billings, formerly of the Government Health Service in San Francisco, was killed by a diamond-head moccasin snake in the grounds of the Billings home. The dog killed the snake, but was fatally bitten and died a few hours later.

Jack High of Petoskey, Mich., stopped fishing long enough to eat lunch, leaving his baited hook dangling over the side of the boat. A minnow was hooked, but the fisherman wasn't going to stop lunch for anything like that, so he again threw the line over the side of the boat. A few moments later a perch swallowed both minnow and hook. The fisherman still refused to take the trouble of clearing his hook, but he got busy a few minutes later when a large pickerel—he says it weighed 18 pounds—came along and swallowed perch, minnow and hook.

Prairie du Chien, Wis., has just awakened to the fact that a real musical prodigy is living in its midst in the person of little Philip Nugent, seven years of age, son of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Nugent. Philip is the youngest of the family. That he possesses musical talent and ability was demonstrated one Sunday, when he constituted the choir, during the services at St. Gabriel's Church, the largest in the city. He sings all of the Latin hymns, including the "O Salutaris, Tantum Ergo, Laudate," and the responses, pronouncing every word perfectly. Last spring this same little fellow took part in an entertainment given by the school children, and made a great hit with the large audience, the play having been repeated twice in order that everybody in town could see it.

LAUGHS

Caller—"Here's a funny thing for your paper. I've walked in with it several weary miles." Editor—"There's such a thing as carrying a joke too far."

"Say," remarked the village lawyer, as he entered the general store. "I want a ribbon for my typewriter." "All right, sir," responded the new clerk. "Do you want one for her, or for it?"

"I'd like to have your check for that little midnight supper I served you at your house last month," said the caterer. "You'll have to wait until I get the doctor's bill for curing me of indigestion," replied the victim. "That comes off your bill."

Burt—I have no doubt you are very sorry about your uncle's death, notwithstanding it brought you into a lot of money. West—Yes; he was doing a good business, you know, and if he had lived a year or two longer he might have left me a good deal more.

"Pardon me, old man," began the veteran boarder, "but we don't want to lose you, and I just want to warn you that you'd better begin to pay something on your board." "Why?" asked the new boarder. "Well, I noticed that Mrs. Starvem was dangerously polite to you this morning."

A missionary in a club once laid his hand on a man's shoulder and said: "Friend, do you hear the solemn ticking of that clock? Tick-tack; tick-tack. And oh, friend, do you know what day it inexorably and relentlessly brings nearer?" "Yes—pay day," the other, an honest, optimistic workingman, replied.

A Suburban minister, during his discourse one Sabbath morning, said: "In each blade of grass there is a sermon." The following day one of his flock discovered the good man pushing a lawn mower about his garden, and paused to say: "Well, parson, I'm glad to see you engaged in cutting your sermons short."

INTERESTING NEWS ARTICLES

WOULD NOT SWALLOW GREASE

While Porsio Ramirez, a Mexican, of Kansas City, Mo., was oiling railroad switches two negroes held him up. Finding no money in the Mexican's pockets, the negroes decided to make him eat a five gallon can of grease Ramirez had. The Mexican would stand for being held up, but he would not be forced to eat grease. Ramirez, a powerful man, outfought the negroes for some time, but finally was overpowered. When the negroes started cramming the grease into his mouth, Ramirez began shouting his objections. His cries were heard by fellow laborers who came to his assistance.

FOUND SHOT DEAD IN HIS COTTAGE

Lying dead, with a rifle by his side, Charles Edwards was found in a Kiamesha Lake cottage, New York, by his 12-year-old son the other day. The man had been dead for several hours. But one bullet had entered the body, tearing through the chest near the heart, cutting away a part of one arm.

Edwards rented the cottage and he and his son lived there, some trouble having separated him and his wife. It is reported that Edwards had considerable money in his possession and that fact leads to the belief that he may have been murdered. Nothing had been disturbed in the room. Young Edwards slept in the room adjoining that of his father and was not awakened by the shot. The authorities are of the opinion that it is a case of suicide, but will make a thorough investigation.

The Edwards cottage is near several large boarding houses and bungalows. No one has been found who heard the shot that killed Edwards.

LOSES GEMS AND TROUSERS

When Charles Crammes, New York diamond broker, awoke in his berth in a Pullman car at Union Station, Baltimore, Md., the other morning, he found a thief had taken his coat, with \$16,000 in unset gems, and also had taken his trousers. The thief overlooked a small sample case tucked under Mr. Crammes's pillow, in which were mounted diamonds valued at \$20,000. Mr. Crammes called for help, and the Pullman conductor provided him with a pair of trousers.

The police were notified and Headquarters detectives were sent to the station. They were unable to determine when or where the diamonds were stolen. Officials of the Pennsylvania Railroad were notified, and the company's private police are searching points between this city and New York.

The diamond broker told Acting Detective Captain Schanberger that he was in business at 500 Fifth Avenue, New York, and that he came on a business trip to the store of Fair & Co., Inc., in this city. He said he boarded the sleeper in New York at 12.50 A. M. and went to sleep soon after.

COUNTERFEIT PLANT AND 10 SUSPECTS TAKEN

Secret Service operators on the trail of note raisers made ten arrests in the metropolitan district, New York, recently, Capt. John S. Tucker, head of the local squad, said. Five of the prisoners are charged with being members of a gang that for three months has been flooding the district with \$1 Federal Reserve notes skilfully raised to pass as tens and twenties. Agents charge that Leon Kynomyk of 44 East Tenth street was passing some of the "doctored" bills. They arrested him and four others, one a woman. Joseph Denisiewick and Dora, his wife, were arrested in their home, 27 avenue C, where, according to the Secret Service, a complete note raising outfit was found. Others arrested were Tony Korol, alleged to be the leader of the gang, at Providence, R. I., and John Atamanoc, at Elizabeth, N. J.

Kynomyk and the Denisiewicks were held in \$5,000 bail each.

Capt. Tucker said that in many instances the notes the prisoners are alleged to have raised passed undetected through many hands and private banks and reached banks of the Federal Reserve system before the frauds were discovered.

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GOOD READING

GIRL CHAINED IN HOG PEN

Margaret, the 1-year-old daughter of John and Mary Vovach, of Fayette City, Pa., was found by truant officers chained to a post in her father's hog pen. When rescued she was so weak from exposure that she had to be carried into her home.

The parents narrowly escaped being lynched when given a hearing before Squire Johnson. Vovach and his wife testified they had been unable to control the girl. Asked what form her incorrigibility took they stated "that when she was sent on errands she frequently overstayed the time allotted and then fearing to return home would go to the home of friends and spend the night." The girl said her father had once dragged her from bed, held her by the heels and beat her with a broomstick.

Kovach and his wife were held for court on \$500 bail. They have four other children.

DYING WOMAN PICKS OWN COFFIN

Sensing the fact that death was rapidly approaching, Mrs. Anna E. Burns, 38 years old, 10 Prince street, Paterson, N. J., summoned an undertaker to her home with instructions to bring with him a casket catalogue.

Although extremely weak after an illness of several months, Mrs. Burns studied the catalogue carefully. While members of her family stood by the dying woman questioned the undertaker closely on styles of caskets, the designs, trimmings, even to such materials used. Finally selecting a silver lined, drop side casket, Mrs. Burns turned her attention to a robe. Then she selected the Rev. C. E. Scudder of the Market Street Methodist Episcopal Church to preside at her funeral.

Mrs. Burns died within a few days and was buried at Mount Rest Cemetery, Butler, with all arrangements carried out as she devised them.

WORKING BOYS IN JAPAN

Working boys in the United States, safeguarded by child labor laws and health regulations, fare much better than the young boys of the working classes in Japan, according to W. B. Norton, a church worker, who has just returned from the Far East. Tokio, the "university city," presents one of the striking contrasts, with its 50,000 college and university students and its "burden-bearing boys," he said.

"In no country we have visited did we see so much boy power used in pulling loads as in Japan. While the situation is somewhat similar in China and Korea, in Japan it impresses one more because the boys are small of stature; and also because it seems so incongruous in a nation laying such emphasis upon public schools, universities and industrial education under government auspices," said Mr. Norton.

Many of these boys work from 4 o'clock in the morning until 10 o'clock at night, Mr. Norton said, and the employers are, under the Japanese compulsory education law, technically "teaching the boys a trade."

To help offset this injustice, the Baptist Tabernacle in Tokio maintains a series of night schools for working boys and girls, two-hour sessions being held. Many of the harsher employers, Mr. Norton said, deny their boys even this time for betterment. However, the boys in these schools, despite the handicap of the long hours of manual labor, are making good progress.

STRANGE VISITOR KNOCKS ON DOORS, THEN QUIETLY DEPARTS

Chesapeake, Ohio, Huntington's over-the-river neighbor, has, among other attractions, a wild man.

The man of mystery, attired in ragged clothes and wearing many days' growth of matted beard, has been observed by residents for several days and is believed to be an escaped inmate of an Ohio asylum.

According to those who have seen the man, he has a habit of approaching a house, knocking on the door, and on noting the person who answers, turns and walks quietly away without offering violence.

The people of Chesapeake and other villages on the Ohio side of the river are alarmed at the strange actions of the so described "wild man." It is claimed that he is in search of a man or woman upon whom he intends to revenge himself of some fancied or actual wrong.

The maniac is supposed to live in a cave or deserted shack in the hills back of Chesapeake.

PLUCKY WOMAN SEIZES BURGLAR

When Mrs. Frank J. Schiendler of No. 15 Oakland Terrace, Newark, N. J., the other morning detected a burglar stealing toward the room in which her daughter was sleeping, she leaped from bed and tackled the intruder. She did not even wait to arouse her husband at her side.

Switching on the lights, Mrs. Schiendler found a short, stocky man about to slip into her daughter Katherine's room. He quickly overpowered her. Mrs. Schiendler's screams awoke not only her husband but also the entire neighborhood. The burglar escaped through an open window by which he had entered. Nothing was stolen.

"When I heard a footstep in the front of the hall near the door of the room of my daughter, Katherine, fear left me," said Mrs. Schiendler. "I leaped from bed, ran to the hall, switched on the light and I threw my arms around the burglar's neck, trying to hold him until help came. Then I screamed. He broke my hold, pushed me against the wall, ran down the stairs and escaped before my husband could reach me."

The intruder is believed to be the "screen burglar" who has been visiting homes in the residential districts on the western outskirts of Newark during the past few weeks.

For two hours after Mrs. Schiendler gave the alarm neighbors, most of them clad in bathrobes, searched the vicinity. Watchdogs were turned loose and the police were summoned.

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"I have no craving for tobacco; this I consider wonderful after having used a pipe for 35 years. I have gained 12 pounds in two months, which is very good at the age of 59 years. To say that the benefits far exceed my expectations is putting it mildly. Anyone in doubt can refer to me."—John Brodie. (Full address on application.)

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"May God bless you. I am feeling finer every day of my life—not like the same person. My appetite is better, and my stomach is all right. I can hold out in walking better, my voice is better and my heart is stronger."—Mrs. Mattie E. Stevenson. (Full address on application.)

"Have used tobacco in all forms (mostly chewing) for 15 years, using about a plug of tobacco a day. I began following your Method on a Friday noon and after that day the craving for tobacco was gone. I am always ready to praise you and the good work you are doing. I can also say that I have gained nine pounds in seven weeks, and feel like a new man."—Robert S. Brown. (Full address on application.)

"My husband hasn't smoked a single cigarette, and has no desire to smoke since following your method of quitting. He looks like a new man—the best I ever saw him. He gained seventeen pounds, and is feeling fine."—C. C. Rogers. (Full address on application.)

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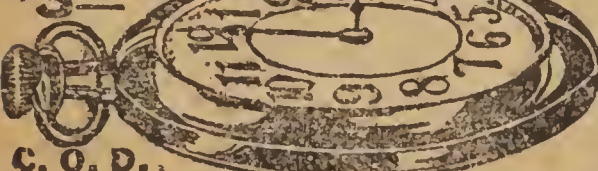
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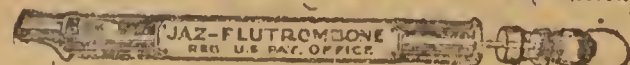
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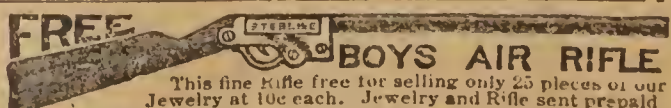
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A BURIED FOREST

It appears that the recovery and use of buried timber is no new thing. For hundreds of years the wood of buried and submerged trees has been recovered and worked among the Swiss Alps, and many an English farmer of the western counties can point with pride to an old cabinet or carved four-poster of black bog oak, says the Washington Star. But, according to Professor D. W. Fagan, it is doubtful if anywhere else in the world there is so vast an area of buried timber of immense size as in the Papakura valley, near Auckland, New Zealand.

Beneath the surface of peat, where the soil has shrunk in drying or has been blown away, the trunks of kauri trees lie exposed to view. For centuries they have been covered by the semi-liquid peat until their branches and crowns have decayed and disappeared. Nothing but the solid heartwood of the mighty trunks remain, and these lie in orderly swathes almost as regular as wheat stalks in a newly-reaped field. The thousand heads all point in one direction, as if the forest had fallen under the sickle of some giant reaper.

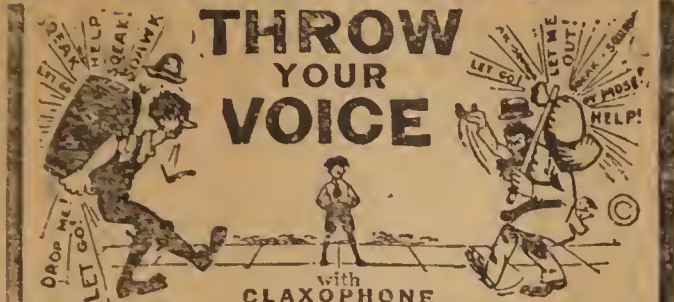
"EVIL EYE" WOMAN

The terror caused by the Salem witches was recalled here this week when residents of Louvecinnes, on the edge of the Marly-le-Roi Forest, in the Seine-et-Oise, appealed to the police for protection against a woman who possessed an "evil eye" of the mediæval ages. Even educated inhabitants of the district fear her spell and are threatening to move away from Louvecinnes unless the woman is banished or kept under surveillance.

Inasmuch as the French law prohibits burning at the stake, which is the only known cure for such a spell, the woman is still at large, and the police commissioner of the district is awaiting instructions from the Paris prefecture before taking any radical measures.

According to residents of Louvecinnes, who piously make the sign of the cross whenever mentioning her, the woman is a war refugee from the Ardennes, having lost her husband and her sons in the war. Her look is said to be deadlier than the claws of any beast, and that all she needs to do is to look at anything or any one and it or they immediately wither or fall victims of some illness.

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PAPER CLOTHES

Having solved the problem of the cost of men's suits, Germany is giving England the benefit of her knowledge. Result: one suit for 60 cents, a suit a week for a year for \$31.20. There is only one drawback to this approach to the millennium. They are made of paper.

Quantities of these suits are said to have been ordered from Amsterdam by English wholesale firms. One concern, which has received its first consignment, has bought 40,000 and 10,000 were shipped to India last summer.

Several varieties have come over so far. There are morning suits, with black coats and striped trousers, blue "serge" business suits, and a number of patterns of black, white and mixed checks. Dark gray overcoats and boys' sailor suits are also being imported.

Two enterprising newspaper reporters have given the paper clothes a trial. One walked along the Thames embankment in a rainstorm. The bottoms of the trousers were soon splashed with mud and water, which made the beautiful colored check design "run" beyond all recognition. When he put his hands into the trousers pockets he found the material so stiff the coat was lifted off his shoulders.

Both men applied the fire test to the suits, which refused to burn, but smouldered with noisome fumes.

Neither attracted much attention, though they walked along fashionable streets, visited the House of Commons and ate in a restaurant.

The suits are advertised as made of the "best class of paper texture." Rain had little effect on them outside of spoiling the colored pattern.

The "cloth" of which they are made has a hard, shiny appearance something like that of brown wrapping paper and the texture is that of fine, closely woven sacking. The cut and fit of the suits leave considerable to be desired unless the wearer has one of those perfect store model figures on which they are cut.

However, after the expected chorus of contemptuous merriment over the suits has run its course, it is believed there will be a considerable demand for them from men who are more concerned with price than style and who might rather pay 60 cents for a suit every week or two than from \$50 to \$150 a year for the real cloth kind.

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